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Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XX, Issue No. 44 | MONDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2010 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

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POLL RESULTS

Are you in favor of Japanese lawmakers' plan to relocate U.S. troops from Futenma, Japan to the CNMI?

Yes	118
No	50

Sunday, February 21, 2010

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Star Readers

Government officials and business executives played storytellers to young kids as they took part in Oleai Elementary School's "Reading with the Stars."

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Under Fire

U.S. Marines and Afghan soldiers advanced through poppy fields of Marjah on Saturday under withering gunfire from Taliban fighters shooting from mudbrick homes and compounds where families huddled in terror.

Asia...Page 16

'Viva Elvis'

Three decades after Elvis Presley took his last bow on the Las Vegas Strip, where he once reigned as king, the magicians of Cirque du Soleil have tried to summon back the power of this supreme entertainer in a show titled, "Viva Elvis."

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Two men drown in CK, Tanapag

10,000 postcards from students inviting Obama to visit CNMI

Obama

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

If government officials can't persuade U.S. President Barack Obama to visit the CNMI, then maybe students can.

San Vicente Elementary School's Student Council representatives have started a postcard project inviting Obama to

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By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Two men drowned in separate incidents Saturday at Sugar Dock in Chalan Kanoa and at a beach in Tanapag.

Department of Public Safety spokesman Eric David told *Saipan Tribune* that the drowning victim at Sugar Dock was described as possibly a citizen of Federated States of Micronesia, while the victim in Tanapag was a local male.

Sources identified the victim as James Ocha, a Chuukese.

David said based on initial information that he gathered the incident at Sugar

See TWO MEN on Page 4

US senator visits Saipan, Tinian on military issues

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

U.S. Sen. Jim Webb (D-Virginia), a member of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, visited Saipan and Tinian on Friday and met with local officials as part of an assessment of Guam and the CNMI's condition and capacity to host U.S. military

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos poses with U.S. Sen. Jim Webb (D-Virginia) after the latter made a courtesy call to the acting governor.

SLIPPERY WHEN WET

A police officer and a man inspect a white Toyota 4 Runner which flipped to its side after the driver lost control of the vehicle due to slippery roads during sudden heavy rains early Friday afternoon near Adobu Drive in Koblerville. The driver and passenger of the vehicle were unhurt.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

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Local

Rebuenog, Aldan face off anew in NI mayoralty race

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Independent Tobias Aldan and Covenant Party's Ramona Rebuenog will once again contest the Northern Islands mayoralty race after the two filed their candidacies at the Commonwealth Election Commission.

The deadline for the filing for the March 27 special election set by Gov. Beningno R. Fitial was last Friday.

Another election was warranted after the Supreme Court ruled that the position is vacant and needs the conduct of a special election to name a qualified candidate.

The CEC board, after the filing deadline at 4pm Friday, immediately certified the two candidates at 5pm.

CEC Executive Director Robert Guerrero said now that the commissioners have certified the official contenders for the race, they can move on with the production of needed election ballots for the activity.

There are 131 registered voters for the Northern Islands after the court disqualified 18 names on the list from the general election last year.

Guerrero confirmed that CEC will produce about 160 ballots for the special election.

As of Friday, the commission hasn't received any request for absentee ballots. It has set March 26 as the deadline for absentee voting for emergency absence.

Saipan Tribune learned that the commissioners also officially designated the customers' service area of CEC as the polling place for the special poll.

Guerrero confirmed that about $20,000 is needed to conduct the special election and that CEC has yet to receive the funding.

He pointed out that if CEC will determine that no one is left at the Northern Islands, the agency could minimize its expenses for the activity. It was earlier disclosed that the agency spent $11,495.90 for every helicopter it sent to the island.

Guerrero said the commission plans to print out the 160 ballots this week.

'Spot in the ballot'

During Friday's special board meeting, the commissioner also drew the lottery for the two candidates to determine whose name will appear first on the ballot.

Guerrero confirmed that Aldan got the left side of the ballot format, while Rebuenog's name will appear on the right side of the one-page ballot.

"Hopefully we will have all the ballots printed this week so we can move on with the schedule," Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

Although many believe that registered voters for the island are on Saipan, Guerrero said CEC will still check and work closely with the other agencies to make sure that all will be accorded the right to vote on March 27.

"We don't know yet if there are still voters residing in the Northern Islands. We will check with the other agencies," he said.

Since the court ruling early this year, the special election called for the Northern Islands was opened to previous and new candidates who want to become the island's mayor.

Whoever wins between Aldan and Rebuenog will serve a new term of five years, from the previous four-year term.

The board earlier approved the waiving of the filing fee of $250 for the two candidates.

Fitial reappoints 2 more special assistants

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial reappointed Mathilda A. Rosario as special assistant for personnel matters and Angie Iginoef-Mangarero as executive assistant for Carolinian affairs.

Fitial, who left Friday for the 2010 National Governors Association Winter Meeting, made the reappointments late Thursday.

Rosario and Mangarero's reappointments do not need the advice and consent of the Senate.

Prior to her first appointment as special assistant for personnel matters, Rosario served as the director for the Office of Personnel Management for several years.

"The administration remains confident in Rosario's abilities and extensive knowledge of personnel rules and regulations," Press Secretary Angel Demapan said in a statement yesterday.

Mangarero, in her reappointment as executive assistant, will continue to oversee the programs and operations of the Carolinian Affairs Office.

Fitial also announced that Juana Guerrero will continue her post as the director for the Department of Public Safety's Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

Other recent reappointments that do not need Senate confirmation include Workforce Investment Agency executive director Edith Deleon Guerrero, Scholarship Office administrator Merissa S. Rasa, and Special Assistant for Youth Affairs Michael Manglona.

So far, Fitial reappointed and appointed nine Cabinet officials needing Senate confirmation, including the heads of Public Safety, Commerce, Lands and Natural Resources, Public Lands, Public Works, Personnel Management, and Community and Cultural Affairs, Corrections, as well as Public Defender.

The governor has yet to name the secretaries of the Departments of Finance, Public Health, and Labor, as well as attorney general, for his second term in office.

Sgt. Paul Ogumoro is new CIB chief

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Department of Public Safety commissioner Santiago F. Tudela has appointed Sgt. Paul Ogumoro as the new chief of the DPS Criminal Investigation Bureau.

Tudela pulled out Sgt. Ogumoro from DPS Traffic Section and assigned him to CIB to replace Sgt. Sylvan Rangamar as officer-in-charge effective last week, according to DPS spokesman Eric David.

David said Rangamar's new position is commander of Traffic.

Ogumoro is a seasoned investigator. He was previously assigned for many years at the Office of the Attorney General's Investigative Unit.

Ogumoro is among three police officers whose promotion to the rank of sergeants was questioned in a discrimination lawsuit filed by a police official and joined by many other police officers.

Police Sergeant James C. Deleon Guerrero filed the court action against DPS over its alleged discriminatory practices in promoting and hiring some police officers. The case is pending in court.

Tudela last week also appointed CNMI's range master Ambrosio T. Ogumoro as the new DPS deputy commissioner.

"Commanders/officers in charge and supervisors within the department have been assigned to their respective units through out the Police and Fire Divisions based on their acquired training and expertise," according to David in a press statement.

The reassignment of personnel, David said, is a result of wide range operational changes and also is an attempt to reduce overall costs.

David said the combined efforts between Tudela and Ambrosio Ogumoro is relevant in developing policies and addressing priority concerns to maintain and enhance the services within DPS and out to the community.

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US government ordered to respond to convicted sex trafficker's motion

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson has ordered the U.S. government to file a response to a motion to correct, set aside or vacate a sentence imposed on a businesswoman convicted of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking and for operating a prostitution business in western Garapan.

In his order issued on Friday, Munson said it appears to the court that defendant Ming Yan Zheng, also known as Li-Na, has met her initial burden in filing the motion.

Munson

"It is ordered that the U.S. Attorney shall file a response to the motion by March 5, 2010," the judge said.

In August 2006, a federal court jury found Chang Da Liu and his co-defendant girlfriend, Zheng, guilty of one count of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking, foreign transportation for purposes of prostitution, or foreign transportation of persons in execution of a scheme to defraud; two counts of sex trafficking; one count of foreign transportation for prostitution; and one count of foreign transportation of persons in execution of fraud scheme.

Liu was sentenced to four years and nine months in prison.

In December 2006, Munson sentenced Zheng to six years and six months in prison, with credit for the time she already served when she was arrested.

The judge directed the defendants to pay jointly a $22,220 restitution to the victim and $25,000 to the other victim. Zheng was also ordered to pay a $55,000 fine and a $500 special assessment fee.

Zheng is currently in the custody of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons and is serving her sentence at Danbury Federal Correctional Facility located in Connecticut.

Filed by lawyer G. Anthony Long last Feb. 11, Zheng failed to sign the motion as she is not jailed in the NMI.

Long said the defendant agrees with pursuing the motion and can verify the motion if the court so requires.

In Zheng's motion, Long asked the federal court to rule that the defendant's conviction for sex trafficking, Mann Act violation and travel fraud be set aside or vacated.

Long requested the court to declare that the defendant's sentence for sex trafficking is illegal or unlawful.

The lawyer asked the court to direct Zheng's sentence for sex trafficking, conspiracy, Mann Act violation and travel found be set aside or vacated.

Counsels of late vice speaker's grandkids see pattern of delay in litigation

The lawyers representing the grandchildren of the late Vice Speaker Jesus P. Mafnas Sr. in their lawsuit against their former attorneys have opposed request for additional time to response to the complaint.

Attorneys William R. Satterberg Jr. and Matthew T. Gregory said other than again asking for additional time to investigate the matter, the defendants have yet to make any substantive movements in the case.

As the court can tell, the defendants have been non-committal with respect to even whether or not counsel will be employed at this time, said Satterberg and Gregory, who are counsels for grandchildren Jess Mafnas, Franklin Mafnas, Britney Mafnas, and Blas Mafnas Jr.

The grandchildren of the late vice speaker have filed a lawsuit in federal court against their former lawyers after they allegedly failed to get any amount from the $1.9 million settlement in the previous lawsuit against the estate of the late business tycoon Larry Lee Hillblom.

The grandchildren sued Guam attorney Peter C. Perez, the Hawaii-based law firm of Cronin, Friend, Sekiya, Kekina, and Fairbanks, and Hawaii attorney Allen K. Williams.

Jess, Franklin, and Britney Mafnas are now adults. Blas Mafnas Jr. is still a minor and is represented by her grandmother and "next best friend" Evelyn Diaz.

The plaintiffs, through counsels Satterberg and Gregory, asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to pay each of them in excess of $375,000 in damages.

"Defendants' actions were a clear breach of their ethical, professional, fiduciary and contractual duties to the plaintiffs in improperly elevating and preferring the interests of certain other clients over those of the others, for which damages are sought," said Satterberg and Gregory in the lawsuit.

The defendants had informed the court that they need "more time to evaluate this claim."

But Satterberg and Gregory said the defendants have yet to retain on island counsel.

"To date, no attorney has entered its appearance in the case, and even the subject pleading is bereft of any entry of appearance," the lawyers said.

Satterberg and Gregory said unless and until such time as counsel has actually entered an appearance in the case, the case stands in a position of effectively being in default status once the 20 days to file an answer has expired.

"The constant pattern of delay which has already begun to develop, however, should stop," they said.

In 1995, Jesus Mafnas Sr. was killed in an aircraft crash while riding in an aircraft piloted by Hillblom.

As a consequence of the crash, a wrongful death lawsuit was pursued in federal district court in 1995 by the then minor plaintiffs against the Hillblom estate.

Defendants Perez, Williams, and the Cronin law firm, acted as counsels for several plaintiffs consisting of Jesus Mafnas Sr.'s then minor grandchildren and other parties. Included as plaintiffs in that lawsuit were the wife of the then vice speaker and his children.

The minor grandchildren plaintiffs in the Hillblom lawsuit were joined as party plaintiffs in the Hillblom lawsuit.

Hillblom was co-founder of DHL Worldwide Express. He moved to Saipan in the 1980s. His plane went down on May 21, 1995 on a flight from Pagan to Saipan. The bodies of the pilot and fellow passenger Jesus Mafnas Sr. were found, but Hillblom's body was never recovered. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

IRS, Tax & Rev to hold seminar

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service and the CNMI Division of Revenue and Taxation will hold a seminar on March 2, 2010 at 9am at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

The seminar is open to all public and private employers and payroll officials and will run approximately six hours. The seminar will include a discussion on the following topics:

Morning session

Form 1099 Misc-Miscellaneous Income, Reporting Requirements, Wages and Benefits paid in Year of Death, Corrections, Penalty, Question and Answer.

Afternoon Session

Fringe Benefits-Taxable and Non-Taxable, Accountable and Non-Accountable plans, Meals and Lodging, Vehicles, Question and Answer.

The seminar is a supplement to the annual seminar conducted by the Division of Revenue and Taxation in December, and covers other payroll related issues outside of the filing of the annual reconciling of wages and salary and the Form W2-CM.

Please call the Division of Revenue and Taxation at 664-1000 to confirm your attendance. For additional information, call Frances Ada at 664-1098, e-mail frances.ada@dof.gov.mp or Clark Fletcher of IRS at clark.m.fletcher@irs.gov or access DOF's website at www.cnmidof.net. ***(PR)***

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Koblerville resident wants better solution to village problems

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
Koblerville resident Daniel Durkin points to the rusty and corroded fence of the village's basketball court.

A Koblerville resident has called on the government to provide long-term and better solutions to the issues in the village, including the ongoing repair of a basketball court and illegal dumping.

A Koblerville basketball court near the fire station is undergoing renovation, but resident Daniel Durkin said what's being done is only a "band-aid solution."

He said instead of the ongoing repainting of the basketball court's rusty and corroded fence, it should be replaced with a new and much safer one.

"Even if they repaint it, the jagged edges are still there and they just looped the wiring. It's dangerous to children and anybody. It's not the way to fix a basketball court," he said on Friday, as he showed the repainting and repairs being done to the fence.

He added that the jagged edges at the bottom of the fence are more dangerous because these are more accessible than the ones on top.

A sign on the fence reads: "This facility will be closed for renovation. Strictly no entry. Thank you. 3K Corp."

A nearby vacant area has also become an illegal dumping ground for all sorts of household junk including refrigerators, as well as a whole car.

Durkin, who said he is originally from New York, said some light posts in the village are also not functioning.

He said he has brought up these problems with different government agencies and officials, including the Office of the Governor, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., Rep. Tony Sablan (R-Saipan), and the Saipan Mayor's Office.

"Right now, what I'm trying to do is help. Rather than placing the blame on someone, we need to come up with solutions to help each village and move ahead," he said, adding that solutions to the problem he raised were even promised to him and his family during the election season. ***(Haidee V. Eugenio)***

Corruption all pervasive in PNG government

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier)—Only five government agencies out of nearly 1,000 have been accountable and transparent in their use of public monies.

The Public Accounts Committee said yester-day this was very sad as it highlighted how corrupt government institutions were in Papua New Guinea and how they were not performing their duties as government agencies under laws and regulations.

Bulolo MP Sam Basil, who is a member of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), said it was a sign of a failed state.

The committee has undertaken a detailed examination of the standard of accounting and handling of public monies, properties and stores in every agency of Government at all levels.

The PAC has examined 33 departments, 25 subsidiary agencies including 19 provincial treasuries, 19 provincial governments, over 400 districts, 19 urban authorities, 19 hospital boards, 116 statutory corporations, commercial entities and all trust accounts including royalty trust accounts.

Chairman of PAC and Nawae MP Timothy Bonga said it was very surprising to discover that all of them were incompetent and were not following Government regulations and by-laws.

"In total we have made inquiry into nearly 1,000 agencies each examined from year 2003 to 2008," Mr. Bonga said. "And the findings have shown that management and accountability by our public servants and the Government has collapsed miserably."

Out of these nearly 1,000 government institutions with all these problems, the Public Accounts Committee had given credit to five of them who have managed themselves well.

They were the Bank of Papua New Guinea, PNG Institute of Public Administration, Post PNG, Goroka Base Hospital and Alotau General Hospital.

"The heads and managers of these five agencies were asked to attend appear before the committee yesterday and were acknowledged and given credit for their competency in their operations," he said.

SENATOR

From Page 1

troops to be relocated from Japan.

Webb also chairs the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on East Asia and Pacific Affairs under the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

The senator's visit came after the CNMI government, through the Military Integration Management Committee, submitted its official position and comments on the military buildup's draft environmental impact statement.

The CNMI government, along with the Saipan and Tinian chambers of commerce, brought up socio-economic concerns and lack of mitigation efforts to address negative impacts of the buildup.

Webb was accompanied by ranking officials of the Marine Forces Pacific Command on Saipan and Tinian.

"The [delegation] hopes to gain a comprehensive understanding from the site tours that they will be conducting," said Press Secretary Angel Demapan.

Prior to visiting the CNMI, Webb also visited Guam, where the transfer of some 8,000. From the CNMI, he went to Okinawa. Webb visited Japan for the first time since the change in government last year.

Webb made a courtesy call on acting Gov. Eloy S. Inos, who took the opportunity to discuss some of the Fitial administration's concerns on the military buildup's draft EIS.

Inos said there still remains the need for both the U.S. and the CNMI to engage in discussion over the economic concerns of the islands.

"Our position has been that we do support relocation to the CNMI as long as it is supported by the United States government," Inos said in a statement.

Webb's visit to the Marianas and Japan has been expected to help resolve the dispute over the relocation of the First Marine Aircraft Wing aviation command at Futenma in Okinawa. Three Japanese lawmakers who visited Saipan two weeks ago said Tinian may be among those to be considered as relocation site for up to 4,000 troops from the controversial Marine base.

Inos also shared the history of the Commonwealth's economic decline and discussed the administration's efforts to support any such moves that will be beneficial to the CNMI and the people.

"If the U.S. decides to relocate troops to the CNMI, then we will engage in discussions to come up with the best approach with less impact, but most beneficial to the islands' economy," Inos added.

Webb also met with Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) and three of four members of the Tinian Legislative Delegation led by its chairman, Senate Vice President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian).

Hofschneider said Webb listened to local officials' concerns. One of those is the relocation of the Tinian landfill to Atgidon area "as agreed upon years ago on the use of military land."

"Putting the landfill in that area away from residential and commercial areas has been one of our major concerns on Tinian," Hofschneider said in a phone interview.

On Tinian, Webb and the other visitors were welcomed by acting Mayor Steve Cabrera and other representatives of the municipal government.

In Guam, Webb met with Gov. Felix P. Camacho, members of the Civilian-Military Task Force in Adelup and senators, among other officials.

Senator Webb has a long experience in Japan, Okinawa and Guam, on both the diplomatic and military fronts, spanning a period of more than 40 years.

Webb first spent time on Okinawa as a U.S. Marine during the Vietnam War and then revisited the island in the 1970s as a defense planner, when he wrote an analysis of the U.S. basing structure in Japan and Guam.

He has also visited Japan and Okinawa extensively as a novelist, journalist, government official, guest of the American military, and as an official guest of the Japanese government.

TWO MEN

From Page 1

Dock occurred at 1pm when the victim was swimming.

Sources, however, maintained that Ocha was spear fishing with a companion.

David said the drowning in Tanapag occurred at 11pm while the victim was also spear fishing.

Sources said the victim in the Tanapag drowning was a Palauan.

The bodies of both victims were recovered and taken to the Commonwealth Health Center where they were pronounced dead.

David said he has no information yet as to who retrieved the bodies.

David said Boating Safety investigators were still completing their reports as of yesterday so he could not elaborate on what really happened.

The DPS spokesman said he is going to release information to the media today, Monday.

Several people already drowned at Sugar Dock and in Tanapag in the past few years.

The two men are the first drowning victims in the CNMI this year.

Last year, four persons drowned in the CNMI. All happened on Saipan.

The last victim was Armando Alampayan, a 30-year-old Filipino farmer who drowned while spear fishing at Micro Beach in November.

Last Aug. 15, Korean businessman Gi Cheol Han drowned when he fell from a cliff line while fishing in Cow Town, Marpi. Boating Safety police officers found him stuck between two rocks on the sea floor about 10 to 15 feet deep.

Last June, a Japanese tourist drowned while swimming with his wife at a beach in front of Hyatt Regency Saipan.

POSTCARDS

From Page 1

visit the CNMI, and they plan to get their schoolmates and the other 10,000 Public School System students to do the same.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan, in an interview, said he would help CNMI students to get the postcards delivered to the president.

"This is a joint project among students, PSS, and my office. The idea is to have some 10,000 postcards from the Northern Marianas public school students sent to the White House to invite the president to come to the CNMI," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune*.

Obama, first lady Michelle Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha are set to visit Guam on March 19, on their way to Australia and Indonesia, where Obama grew up.

Guam Gov. Felix P. Camacho invited CNMI Gov. Benigno R. Fitial to Guam for Obama's visit.

CNMI senators passed a resolution formally inviting Obama to also visit the Commonwealth, which is about 30 minutes away from Guam. Senators, in passing Sen. Pete P. Reyes' (R-Saipan) Senate Resolution 17-03, said it will be a "great honor" and an "extraordinary privilege" to have Obama pay an official visit to the CNMI while he is in the region.

They said a presidential visit will bring to the fore issues critical to the CNMI, including the recent federalization of its immigration, the military buildup in Guam that will also impact the CNMI, and the creation of the Marianas Trench National Monument and the authorization for a visitor center in the region.

Rep. Diego T. Benavente (R-Saipan) also introduced House Resolution 17-5, officially inviting Obama to visit the CNMI, but the House has yet to act on the resolution.

If and when Obama visits the CNMI, he will be the first sitting U.S. president to ever set foot in the CNMI.

The highest ranking U.S. official to set foot in the CNMI's capital of Saipan is former President George H.W. Bush, when he was still vice president to former President Ronald Reagan. Bush flew to Saipan on his way to a six-day visit to China in October 1985.

Faisao: Over 1K more people on food stamp in 2009

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI's Nutrition Assistance Program registered over a thousand additional individuals in calendar year 2009.

Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Acting Secretary Melvin Faisao disclosed Friday that in 2009 the agency served a total of 8,591 participants in the Food Stamp program, which is 1,078 more clients than the 7,513 recorded in 2008.

The figures are for Saipan, Rota, and Tinian.

"In comparison to 2008, we realized tremendous increase in 2009 both in the amount of benefits expended or issued to clients as well as increase in participation," Faisao admitted.

Saipan Tribune learned that in December 2008, DCCA issued a total of $617,711 in benefits to clients compared to $828,555 issued in December 2009.

Faisao

The figure translates to an increase of $210,844 in benefits issued by the agency.

Faisao said that they spent $7.3 million in benefits in 2008, while the agency recorded $8.3 million in total benefits in 2009—an increase of $935,000.

Records obtained by *Saipan Tribune* showed that Chamorros remain the top group served by the program.

There were 1,264 cases and a total of 4,179 Chamorro members in the food stamp program in 2009. DCCA spent a total of $414,454 in monthly benefits to the group.

Carolinians, meanwhile, had 492 cases and 1,635 members who received $169,980 in a monthly basis.

The same record revealed that there were 1,510 Filipino members in the program of which DCCA spent $114,046 monthly; $56,429 monthly for 532 Chuukese members in the program; $30,435 monthly benefits to 309 Palauans; $14,023 for 125 Chinese members; $11,567 monthly for 114 Pohnpean members; $5,565 monthly for Americans; $4,263 monthly benefits spent for 41 Yapese; $1,279 benefits for 15 Kosrae members; and $1,041 monthly for 13 Bangladesh members in the program.

Other ethnicities received less than $1,000 in benefits monthly such as Nepalese, Marshallese, Thai, Bali, Japanese, Indonesian, Korean, Samoan, Taiwanese, and Vietnamese.

The DCCA earlier disclosed that the increase in the number of participants in the food stamp program was a result of the bad economy that caused many businesses to shut down, the minimum wage hike, and the application of trade quotas to the CNMI as imposed by the World Trade Organization.

Because of the increase in clients, DCCA managed to secure additional funding for the program from $9.8 million in fiscal year 2008 to roughly about $12 million in FY 2009.

The funding level remains the same in FY 2010.

Joint effort to ensure safety of *Queen Mary II*

GUAM—U.S. Coast Guard will be partnering with the Port Authority of Guam, Guam Police Department, and Guam Customs to ensure a safe visit for the *Queen Mary II* today.

The *Queen Mary II* is 1,132 feet long and at 148,528 gross tons is the largest vessel to have ever visited the port of Guam. Authorities will escort the vessel and enforce a 100-yard security zone from the time the vessel arrives in port to when the vessel departs.

The boating public is advised to stay clear of Apra Harbor on Feb. 22 and that transit delays can be expected. Commercial operators within 500 yards of the *Queen Mary II* should operate at a minimum speed necessary to maintain a safe course.

For more information boaters can listen to Marine Channel 22A for the Safety Broadcast Notice to Mariners starting early Monday morning. The broadcast will detail that while underway, anchored, or moored in Apra Harbor vessels will not be permitted within 100 yards of the *Queen Mary II* unless authorized by the Captain of the Port. A violation of the security zone is a felony offense and is punishable with fines of up to 32,500$ and/or 5 years imprisonment.

The Coast Guard will ensure that all required security measures are being met during the port call. "Our partnership with the Port Police at Port Authority of Guam enables us to work together to achieve safety and security for the vessel, its passengers, and the facility while still allowing vendors to sell their wares and show visitors the "Hafa Adai" spirit of Guam," stated LCDR Felton Gilmore, Chief of Prevention, Coast Guard Sector Guam.

The *Queen Mary II* will not be open for public tours however, on Sunday the Port Authority will be announcing where the public can go to see the ship. ***(PR)***

BIRTHDAY BOY
Happy 6th birthday to Jacob Peter Hamilton Aldan. May you be filled with joy on this very special day. With love, from your family.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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NMC assures House members of continued accreditation

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Top officials of Northern Marianas College assured members of the House of Representatives on Thursday that they will do their best to keep the college's accreditation.

NMC Board of Regents chair Janet Han King, however, said that keeping NMC accredited can never be accomplished without the full support of members of the Legislature.

Accompanying King in Capital Hill last week were NMC interim president Lorraine Cabrera and accreditation liaison officer Galvin Deleon Guerrero.

The meeting with the Legislature was focused on the institution's current operational status and accreditation.

King reiterated what the first accreditation visiting committee stated in 1985—"in order for the college to succeed and achieve its full potential, it must be a college of, by, and for the people."

King said the history of accreditation at NMC has been a rocky one, especially over the past 10 years, in which the accrediting commission has placed sanctions of one form or another on the college.

It was only in June 2009 when NMC reaffirmed its accreditation to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

"As the chair of the Board of Regents, I don't proclaim to be an expert on accreditation, but I understand and appreciate its importance at the college. In addition to assuring quality in the college's programs, the accreditation process promotes continuously quality improvement and enables our students and programs to avail of federal funding and financial aid," she told lawmakers, adding that without accreditation, NMC would not—and could not—be what it is today.

King assured them that they will live up to the mission to provide the best quality and meaningful post secondary and adult educational opportunities for the purpose of improving the quality of life for the individual and for the CNMI as a whole.

"But we cannot do it alone…. Just as NMC is a community college, we need the help and participation of the community that it serves. We need your help because you represent and speak for those very people. In short, we need to work together for our college and for our community," she added.

King said that Thursday's meeting with the 17th Legislature will be the first step toward a collaborative work.

"Conversations like this should not be limited to budget hearings, for if life-long learning is the goal of education, then it behooves us too have life-long conversations about education itself. But, as with any conversation requiring informed discussion, we must invite voices that are knowledgeable and experienced in the subject matter," she added.

Last month, the accrediting commission informed NMC that although it accepted its midterm report submitted in October 2009, its accreditation may still be affected by some "series" of events that are happening in the college.

It was on Jan. 12 when the board suspended president Dr. Carmen Fernandez pending the investigations against her. To date, no decision has yet been made whether Fernandez will be reinstated to the position. Cabrera was named the college interim president.

TRIO WEEK MONETH G. DEPOSA

Participants in last week's Student Support Services open house at the Northern Marianas College pose after the kickoff activity it held for the celebration of National Trio Week.

NMC student finds Math and Science Summer Camp fulfilling

A summer full of math and science adventures. An off-island trip filled with field trips to prominent universities, museums, and a theme park. Counseling services, preparatory workshops, and computer classes.

That was the experience of Vermon Santos, a student of the Northern Marianas College's Educational Talent Search, who was selected to attend an off-island Math and Science summer camp in California. Santos, a sophomore at Saipan Southern High School, participated in the Monterey Peninsula College's Math & Science Upward Bound Program in the summer of 2009.

Santos

He had the opportunity to visit colleges in southern California, whichincluded University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), University of Southern California (USC), University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB), California State University Long Beach (CSULB), and many other colleges in the area.

The most important experience for Santos was being able to "live" the college life during the short period that he was there. He stayed in dormitories during the six-week long summer camp program and ate dorm cafeteria food, along with actual college students. He was also able to compare the various environments, college programs, and services offered by each university and college that he visited.

"This was truly the experience of a lifetime," said Santos. "I am extremely thankful for having had the opportunity to attend the summer program."

During the summer program, Santos was also exposed to classes that offered intensive math and science training. He was afforded the opportunity to interact with faculty who conducted research in math and science and was also allowed to study research procedures under the supervision of faculty members.

"The classes I took were both fun and challenging," added Santos.

The ETS program was invited to send an active participant to the Math and Science Summer program, which is designed to strengthen math and science skills of participating students primarily in the 10th and 11th grade level in high school. The goal of the program is to help students recognize and develop their potential to excel in math and science and encourage postsecondary degrees in these fields. ***(PR)***

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Laser and live-fire training at W-517 and FDM

The U.S. Navy will conduct laser training at Warning Area-517 on Feb. 23 and 24 from 8am to 5pm.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Air Force will conduct live-fire and laser training exercises on the island of Farallon de Medinilla on the following dates and times:

- Feb. 22-24 from 10am to 10pm.
- Feb. 25 from 7:45am to 10pm.
- Feb. 26 from 7:45am to 5pm.

The general public especially fisherman, commercial pilots, and marine tour operators are advised to stay clear from these areas during the times and dates indicated.

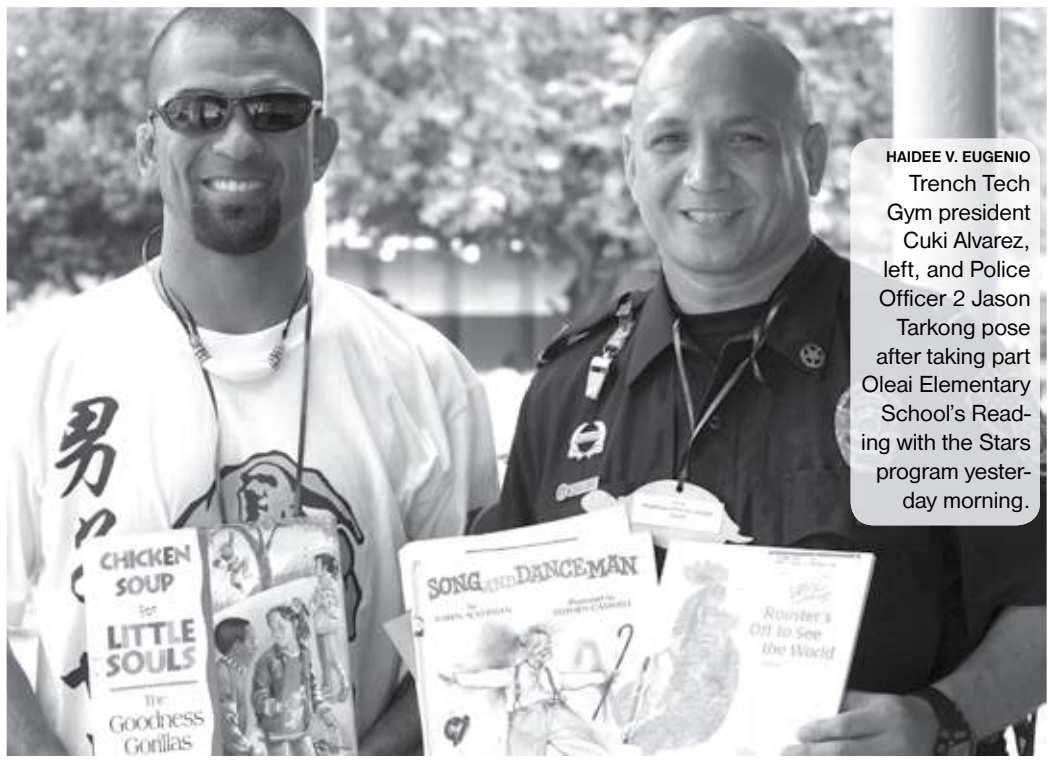
W-517 is an irregular shaped polygon comprising of 14,000 nautical miles of airspace that begins south of Guam and extends south-southwest in international waters. W-517 supports surface and aerial gunnery, missiles, and laser exercises. This will affect fishing in the vicinity of Santa Rosa Reef and Galvez Bank.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla training area will be on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. Farallon de Medinilla plays a special and unique role in national defense because its location provides access frequency that supports established training requirements. In addition, the air and sea space in the Farallon provides sufficient room for the many different attack profiles necessary to replicate training opportunities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

For more information, contact the Joint Region Marianas Public Affairs Office at (671) 339-3209. ***(PR)***

Govt officials, business execs grace 'Reading with the Stars'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
Trench Tech Gym president Cuki Alvarez, left, and Police Officer 2 Jason Tarkong pose after taking part Oleai Elementary School's Reading with the Stars program yesterday morning.

Government officials and business executives played storytellers to young kids as they took part in Oleai Elementary School's "Reading with the Stars" last Friday.

The activity marked the second year of the activity which aims to motivate and intensify children's interest in reading.

Among the first guest readers who appeared before their listeners were NMI Representative to the U.S. Gregorio Kilili Sablan, Superior Court Presiding Judge Perry Inos, Public Safety officer Jason Tarkong, and Public School System language arts coordinator Steve Smith.

Also in attendance were Department of Public Health's John Tagabuel, Commonwealth Utilities Corp. engineer Larry Manacop, Troops To Teachers army veteran Eugene Tabhan, and Joeten Kiyu Public Library coordinator John Gonzales.

Saipan Chamber of Commerce 2009 Businessman of the Year Ben Babauta, along with McDonalds' Ana Olaes and Finance and Insurance administrator Claudio Adriano, were also among the guests readers.

Current and former school officials also took time off their busy schedules and shared their favorite stories to students.

The group included Oleai principal Glenn Muna, former school administrators Remy Seman and Evelyn Ooka, vice principal Jack Sablan, OES teacher aide awardee Balbina Solberg, and a number of volunteers and parents of students.

According to the event coordinators, "Reading with the Stars" is part of OES' reading campaign throughout the month. The purpose of the event is to bring outstanding community members to encourage children to read and learn.

Third-grade teacher Nanette Magallanes said the prime objective of the event is to "motivate" all the kids to view reading as an enjoyable activity.

Last Friday, all 19 students from her class showed enthusiasm in listening and participating in the discussion as Judge Perry Inos read to them "Seashore" and school reading resource teacher Jasylene Parico shared "Dogorella."

Students also enjoyed the story of the "Song and Dancing Man" shared by a reporter from a local newspaper.

Nine-year-old Neil Alfonso said that it's good to see "new faces" telling different stories.

The third grader chose "Dogorella" as the story he enjoyed listening to the most.

Like Alfonso, 9-year-old Jerilynn Haruo expressed joy upon hearing children stories from guests.

"I like to read…because it made me aware of the popular children's stories," she said.

Both students said they learned valuable lessons from all the stories they listened to.

Second graders Kimo Camacho and Chantilly Kaipat, meanwhile, said that reading can help them become smarter students.

Among their favorite stories was the "One Tiny Turtle" presented by one of the guests readers.

"I learned from the story that things can grow and change…" Kaipat said.

Event coordinators for the second annual "Reading with the Stars" included reading resource teachers Tina Tenorio and Jasylene Parico, librarian aide Charlene Valle, and school counselor Patty Mendoza.

How to avoid employee lawsuits in SHRM meeting

The Society for Human Resource Management CNMI Chapter's topic for its February general membership lunch meeting is "Avoiding Employee Lawsuits," that will be presented by attorney Farrell Matthew Smith.

The lunch meeting will be held at the Pacific Islands Club's Charley's Cabaret on Thursday, Feb. 25, 2010, from 11:30am to 1:30pm.

This timely seminar is open to the public and will be an invaluable opportunity for employers to learn how to avoid and protect themselves from employee lawsuits. Employment lawsuits are continually on the rise.

Smith will explain some of the common areas that get employers into trouble including, but not limited to, confidentiality, employee handbooks, retaliation, and religious issues. Smith will also present some of the best ways to avoid employees filing lawsuits against their employers and best strategies to protect the organization from an employee lawsuit if one is filed against them.

The seminar includes lunch and handouts. The cost is $20 for SHRM members and $30 for non-members. Seats are limited so reserve your seat by contacting Polly Deleon Guerrero (SHRM CNMI Chapter vice president) at the Pacific Islands Club at 237-5122 or e-mail Eric Plinske (SHRM CNMI Chapter president) at ericplinske@yahoo.com.

SHRM is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 250,000 individual members, SHRM's mission is to serve the needs of HR professionals by providing the most essential and comprehensive resources available. As an influential voice, SHRM's mission is also to advance the human resource profession to ensure that HR is recognized as an essential partner in developing and executing organizational strategy. The CNMI Chapter is composed of human resource professionals from a variety of industries, large and small, who recognize a need for a local society for professionals in the human resource field. The CNMI Chapter is affiliated with the national organization.

Reserve your seat by calling Polly at PIC at 237-5122 or email ericplinske at ericplinske@yahoo.com. ***(PR)***

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

for
Saipan American Education Foundation School

The public is invited to provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this Conditional Use application #2010-0389, portion of Lot EA 109-New-1-1, 109-New-1-R1 (Chalan Kiya)

Date : March 1, 2010 (Monday)
Time : 5:30 pm
Place : Zoning Office, 2nd Floor,
Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan.

Above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the projects may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may also be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office no later than 4:30 pm, March 2, 2010. Written comments may be submitted via e-mail to staff@zoning.gov.mp, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or delivered to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, DanDan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please contact Therese Ogumoro, Acting Zoning Administrator, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Division 3 of Title 10 CMC).

/s/ Herminia M. Fusco, Board Chairperson

MENTAL HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL
1st Quarter Meeting
9:00 a.m. – Feb. 24, 2010 - Wednesday
Pacific Islands Club

Agenda

I. Preliminary Matter
a. Call to Order
b. Roll Call
c. Adoption of Agenda
d. Adoption of Minutes from 2/25/09 meeting
II. Old Business
a. Chair Report
b. Sub-Committee reports
i. Nomination/Membership/By-Laws (Janet)
ii. Legislative/Regulatory (Tom)
iii. Planning (Jennifer)
c. MHPC/Coalition projects
d. Rota Report
e. Tinian Report (Winnie)
f. TLC/Clubhouse updates
g. Concerns
III. New Business
a. Election of Officers
- MHPC Chair
- MHPC Vice-Chair
- MHPC Secretary
- MHPC Fiscal Officer
- New Schedule for Meetings

IV. Misc/Announcement
V. Next Meeting
a. To be announce-PIC
VI. Adjournment

DISCONNECTION NOTICE

IT&E would like to remind its customers that payments not received by close of business on February 23rd, will result in temporary suspension of all telephone services after 6:00 p.m. on that day. To prevent temporary suspension, customers must pay their bills on or before February 23rd.

THIS WILL BE THE ONLY NOTIFICATION IT&E CUSTOMERS WILL RECEIVE*.

* You have the right to dispute this notice. You must state your claim in person or in writing no later than February 23rd. You must pay any amount not in dispute to avoid disconnection. Payment denotes acceptance of all charges.

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A LOOK AT PAST CAMPOREES

Anatahan Taga Adventure 1997

By OSCAR C. CAMACHO
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Editor's Note: The author is the Troop Committee chairman for the NMI Boy Scouts. As part of celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America, the Saipan Tribune *is publishing a series of articles featuring past camporees and activities of the local boy scouts program. The following is an excerpt of a longer article.*

Not everything was as scheduled since everybody, 15 boys and 15 adults, were exhausted after the transfer of water, food, supplies and other camping amenities onto the side of the Anatahan Cliff from the *Challenger*. Several human chains were formed to accomplish the incredible task of moving most items to the plain grassy fields, above a beach known an Alutong Saipan.

Justice Villagomez and the Fish & Wildlife Enforcer, Mr. Jess Omar, a Desert Storm veteran went into the ravines and looked for games. There were several high-powered guns shots suggesting the hunt successful. Boys Scouts followed, and a story was told that one of the boys held one goat and for some reason the goat got away. It was thought that the goat was dead since a gun wound was obvious and the goat was knocked out.

By afternoon, two games were brought to camp. Mr. Flores had shot two, and Emory was carrying one. On the third time they had rested on the way back to camp, the goat got up and ran, similar to the boy's experience. The goats were skinned, cutup, and cooked—one in a pot and the other barbequed. Most of the boys and some adults decided to hide away from the sun's extreme heat and some slept the whole afternoon. Justice Villagomez and several adults lined up the kitchen and started playing the ukulele. Everybody was tired.

The sun decided to give the day a rest, and at that time, dinner was served. Rice, estufado goat, and barbeque goat ribs. The mid-day meal lunch was prepared fish and there were leftovers, but everybody went for the goat meat and soup on rice. Kelaguen higadu (internal organ-must be lungs) was o'uderves. It melts in your mouth and supposedly food for champions or for the natives—"Thanks." After dinner meeting was called, everybody sat forming circle-items of discussions included the day's job and tomorrow's schedule, instructions, and assigned responsibilities. Troop 912 won the bid on the shit department, 920 got garbage and cooking breakfast. The Scout Master for this high adventure camp is Congressman Rosiky Camacho—short and to the point and tough on the boys. The theme for the evening was on the word "*Trustworthy*"—what does it mean? The Judge asked and Doctor Hofschneider explains in Chamorro—the boys answer—and we listen.

The boys were asked if they could all speak Chamorro, and it was obvious that even both Chamorro and Carolinian boys preferred English. Sleep was sweet and Mr. Larry Ilo got himself visited by giant coco crab. The crab was asking for it. According to story, the giant crab went up to Larry in the middle of the night, scratched Larry's back and said I'm tomorrow's menu. Breakfast is eggs, spam, rice, and bread. Looks like Justice just got up. He's in shorts and without a shirt—asking Larry about the visit and standing next to director Luis Wabol. The giant crab hangs where others hung before, but only so lonesome this time. Justice and others went hunting for crab last night and didn't find any. Coffee must be good since the Judge now explains he had just bitten a fly from his coffee thinking it was something else like coffee grounds. He spits it out and continues to drink his coffee. Revenge of the flies. Goat carcasses are used as flytraps, and are all displayed on the sides of tree stems. In Chamorro, Justice Villagomez, says he would write a letter to the editor explaining that Larry caught the crab, the crab ran away and Larry looked for it around the kitchen area. Laughter with the adults stating "Larry and the crab and Judge and the fly." Judge says he's killed about 652 flies with his traps. He's got himself a sweet revenge.

"Nanga I Na'mu—wait for your food." Judge tells a revenge story about Tanapag boys at a gas station. The fly returns a favor, and Justice Villagomez explains the use of translators in court translating "Nanga Na'mu" word for word, and missing the point. In Carolinian, a group converses on food and other stuffs on supplies for betel nut. Everybody is hoping to bring home betel nut from Tun Benedicto Taisacan's plantation. The Judge does morning Tai-chi ritual in the distance. Doing the crane, the bird, spider and the "fly", and everybody observing saw him do a "fly". Doctor Hofschneider lectures on heat exhaustion and need for kids to drink a lot of water. "The importance of education—the strength of our people lies in education—an educated minority will be a strength." The doctor explains that since we don't have the numbers, to be in a position of power, the greatest strength would come from an educated populace. Chamorros and Carolinians must pursue education if they are to complete successfully in the future.

Troop 917 from Oleai are of younger boys which consist of six boys and three adults leaders—Ben Pua, Eugene Igosomar, and Larry Ilo who serves as an outdoor chairman. Troop 912 has seven boys with two adult leaders. Troop 912 prepared the latrine site and 917 burns garbage—920 works the kitchen. Al Saurez instructs, helps, commands, and looks. Carlos San Nicolas, a guest of Justice, prepares along with Mr. Joe Bermudes for a hunt. Farallon De Mendenilla is visible in the distance; it looks like a dirty cloud on the horizon. Mr. Larry Ilo raises a concern to the Congressman and Scout Master—why are the Americans still bombing our island? Asked the kids—explanations on Covenant founder's…Rich fishing grounds and bird's eggs have more meaning than politics. The Boys Scout ought to know. Last year, the Americans showered the islands with bombs and in the distant horizon there appeared a wall of smoke reaching up into the heavens.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
PERIMETER FENCE/ROADSIDE & DITCH GRASS CUTTING
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

CPA-RFP-002-10

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting sealed cost proposals for the cutting of grass inside and outside along the perimeter fence. The sealed cost proposals are due by 4:30 p.m., Friday, March 12, 2010 at the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport. Scope of work and the area sketch shall be available for pick up at the said office by Monday, February 22, 2010.

Please make arrangements with our Operations Supervisor at telephone number 483-6517 for a site visit to better understand the scope of work and to identify the areas depicted on the sketch.

A mandatory pre-proposal conference will be held on Friday, February 26, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. at the CPA Conference Room located on the 2nd floor of the departure terminal.

Along with your proposal, the submission of proof of insurance, company past performance and experience, and a list of equipment are required to completely determine the company's capability to perform the work. The successful proposer shall enter into an agreement with CPA for a two-year term which is renewable thirty (30) days prior to the expiration date for another year or as determined by CPA. The renewal of agreement shall be contingent upon CPA's satisfaction of the company's performance and the availability of funding.

CPA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals if in its sole decision to do so, is in its best interest.

/s/ EDWARD M. DELEON GUERRERO
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
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FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
MOWING, TRIMMING AND CLEANING OF
PROPERTY GROUNDS
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

CPA-RFP-003-10

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting sealed cost proposals for the mowing of grass, trimming of flowers and trees and cleaning of the airport grounds. The sealed cost proposals are due by 4:30 p.m., Friday, March 12, 2010 at the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport. Scope of work and area sketch shall be ready for pick up at the said office by Monday, February 22, 2010.

Please make arrangements with our Maintenance Department at telephone number 237-6532 for a site visit to better understand the scope of work and to identify the areas depicted on the sketch.

A mandatory pre-proposal conference will be held on Friday, February 26, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. at the CPA Conference Room located on the 2nd floor of the departure terminal.

Along with your proposal, the submission of proof of insurance, company past performance and experience, and a list of equipment are required to completely determine the company's capability to perform the work. The successful proposer shall enter into an agreement with CPA for a two-year term which is renewable thirty (30) days prior to the expiration date for another year or as determined by CPA. The renewal of agreement shall be contingent upon CPA's satisfaction of the company's performance and the availability of funding.

CPA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals if in its sole decision to do so, is in its best interest.

/s/ EDWARD M. DELEON GUERRERO
Executive Director

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Feb. 22, 1999

Greenspan criticizes Clinton's wage proposal

Though less noted, it was big news when Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan criticized another of President Clinton's favorite ideas: raising the minimum wage, according to a recent article in the Washington Times written by Thomas Dilworth. Mr. Greenspan—the nation's "chief economist" —did not merely mention concerns about raising the entry-level wage. He elaborated. He spoke directly to elected leaders in a congressional hearing the day after the state of the union in terms that everyone can understand. Said he: "We have to be very careful about thinking that we can somehow raise standards of living by mandating an increase in minimum wage". "The last time President Clinton approved a mandate wage hike (1996), he succeeded in raising family incomes for the average minimum worker by precisely 1.02 percent—or about $7 per week," wrote Dilworth.

Gradual phaseout of unskilled workers sought

President Bill Clinton's special representative to the 902 talks, Edward B. Cohen, has said a new proposal on federal takeover of local immigration will seek to eliminate garment workers and unskilled workers in the Northern Marianas. Cohen, however, explained under a legislation the Clinton administration will submit to the US Congress will introduce provisions for a gradual reduction of such workers. He said the "proposal does provide for a gradual phase-out of such workers over ten years, and for the continuing extension of unskilled workers under certain circumstance."

Feb. 22, 2000

Beverage tax sought for recycling plan

The Solid Waste Task Force has asked the CNMI government to earmark 50 percent of the money collected from the beverage container tax for the island's recycling program. Implementing a recycling program is a necessary component of an island-wide solid waste facility plan since it will be very expensive for the administration to keep on expanding or building a landfill in the future, according to John Harder, Municipal Waste Program manager. "We feel that we should make people aware that disposal cost money and they should look at ways to reduce their waste," he said. The task force has already acquired basic equipment needed for the recycling system.

Senate asked to hold off CUC oversight

The chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications yesterday asked his fellow lawmakers to hold off their planned oversight into the controversies surrounding the Saipan power project pending completion of an investigation being conducted by the Office of the Public Auditor. Senate Vice President Thomas P. Villagomez believes that the Legislature should focus on more important issues and give OPA the responsibility of looking into the project. The Attorney General's Office has made its own investigation earlier but has yet to submit a written report on its findings.

Feb. 22, 2001

Inter-island tour package seen to boost tourism

Entangled in a virtually long period of economic slump, the Marianas Visitors Authority is now looking at working with its Guam counterpart for a possible inter-island tour package to perk up visitor arrivals in the region. CNMI tourism officials are planning to meet with their compeer in the Guam Visitors Authority to discuss concerted programs that may encourage increased visitors traffic to the Mariana Islands. MVA has expressed willingness to further programs that would increase visitor arrivals to the CNMI, including the possible introduction of inter-island tour packages as previously proposed.

Arriola bows out as Cabrera's counsel

The US District Court will finally put an end today to the celebrated trial of former Finance Secretary Antonio R. Cabrera. But this time, the lawyer who was beside him from the start would no longer be by his side. Attorney Joseph A. Arriola has formally bowed out as counsel of Mr. Cabrera. Last February 16, the Superior Court handed out a decision granting Arriola's request to withdraw from Criminal Case No. 00-0337, citing good cause. The Superior Court's decision caps a wild and woolly episode in the Mr. Cabrera case, which started when the former government officials shocked the public when he fired Mr. Arriola the day when the US District Court was supposed to come out with the sentence on charges of corruption.

Commonwealth I Sankattan Siha Na Islas Mariana
Ofisinan I Gubietno
Dipåttamenton I Tano' Pupbliku

NOTISIA POT PRINIPONEN ATKILON TANU PUBLIKU

Segun i lai Publiku 15-2, Seksiona 106, i Depattamention Tanu Publiku ha notitisia todus ni intension para ma-atkilan tanu publiku gi Lower Base, Saipan. Libre i publiku muna` halom hafa hinassoña nu este na planu.

i. I tanu gaige gi Lot No. 038 E 02 ya i minedoñg 6,800 metru kuatdrau, poku mas o`menus. Guaha kopian este na lugat gi Depattamention Tanu para haye malagu umina.

ii. I para u fan atkila i Success International Corporation ni ineluluye as Señor Guo Jun Miao. Guiya lokue sekretariu yan treasurarion i kompania.

iii. I mapropopone na atkilon manegosiu as Señor Miao.

iv. I lugat para bisnis man-areglan kareta yan man-mueba tumobit 24 oras diariamente. I tetminon atkilon para 25 años na tiempu ya siña lokue ma-ekstende para otru 15 años. I tutat atkilon gaige gi pot sientu gi ma-katkula ni marehistra na kompanian man-ebaluan balin tanu.

v. I kopian kontratan atkilon gaige gi Depattamention Tanu gi Joeten Building, Dandan, Bank of Saipan Commercial Building, Luta; yan primet bibienda gi Kings Commercial Bldg. giya Tinian.

vi. I Depattamenton Tanu taya renisibiña kabales na propositu pot atkilon i lugat ni gaige guine na anunsiu.

vii. I Sekcretariun Depattamenton Tanu siña ha resibe nina halum publiku pot este priniponen atkilon, fabot `sino kinentra, antes `sino Måtso ida 8, 2010 gi katkuet offinan tanu giya Saipan, Tinian yan Luta.

ARONGORONGOL REEL AKKILONUL FALÚWEER TOULAP

Sángi Tálil 106 (b) mellól alléghúl toulap 15-2, Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap ekke atotoowow ammataf igha ebwe akkilaaló eghús falúw mellól Seipél, Commonwealth Teel faluwasch Marianas. Schóókka eyoor máfiyeer rebwe isisilong aghiyegh, aweewe, reel pomwol akkilonul ammwelil falúweer toulap me bwal Alléghúl Toualp ye 15-2, e ayoora, lamal aweewe kka rebwe mweiti ngáli milikka ebwe akkatéélló.

i. Pomwol akkilonul falúweer toulap nge ekke bwáári Lot No 038 E 02, eyoor olangaras walabwughúw (6,800) square meters, elapeló ngáre eghús, elo Lower Base, Seipél. Tilighial bwuley yeel nge eyoor mereel Bwulasiyool Falúweer Toulap (Public Lands) ngáre óubwe ghuleey fischi.

ii. Schéschéél schóól akkilon nge Success International Corporation, CNMI Corporation. Samwoolul Corporation nge Guo Jun Miao.

Samwoolul Treasurer/Sekkeretoria nge Guo Jun Miao.

Schóól aweweel akkilon nge Mr. Guo Jun Miao.

iv. Schóól akkilon ebwe ayoora me mwóghutáágheli fasilidóód fengál me leliyel ffééról ghareeta. 24-hours reel towing service shop, me akkááw angaangal.

Tool aighúghúl pomwol akkilon nge ebwe reweigh me limoow ráágh (25 years) me emmwel ebwe sóbwusóbw ngáli bwal seigh me limwoow ráágh (15 yrs)

Pomwol akkilon yeel llól alongal ráágh nge ebwe mwir sángi llapal méél falúw (value of the property) me bwal meeta kka e akkayú llól bwuleey yeel.

v. Tilighial akkilon yeel nge emmwel óubwe bwughi mereel bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap, elo aruwowal pwó (2nd floor) me Joeten Dandan Commercial Building llól Tuturam, Seipél; aruwowal pwó (2nd floor) mellól Bank of Saipan Commerial Building, Luuta; me ngáre mmwal pwo (1st floor) mellól Kings Commercial Building, Tchuluyol.

vi. Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap nge esáál bweibwogh mwo pomwol akkilon ye elo Lower Base, Seipel.

vii. Samwoolul Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap nge ebwe bwughil ischil mángemáng kkaal, aingiingil mereel amweyút mmwal Mááilap 8, 2010 mellól Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap iye elo Seipél, Luuta me ngáre Tchúlúyól.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public lands in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested parties of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published.

i. The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot No. 038 E 02, containing an area of approximately 6,800 square meters, more or less, situated in Lower Base, Saipan. A copy of the location of the parcel is available at the Department of Public Lands for inspection.

ii. The prospective lessee is Success International Corporation, a CNMI Corporation. The Director of the Corporation is Guo Jun Miao.

The President/Secretary/Treasurer of the Corporation is Guo Jun Miao.

iii. The proposed lease was negotiated by Mr. Guo Jun Miao.

iv. The lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of developing and managing a facility with a complete automobile repair shop, 24-hour towing service shop, and related operations.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 25 years, with an option to extend the lease for an additional 15 years.

The proposed annual rental during the term is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property, including existing structure(s).

v. A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the office of the Department of Public Lands, located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan; the 2nd floor of the Bank of Saipan Commercial Building, Rota; or the 1st floor of the Kings Commercial Building, Tinian.

vi. The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land in Lower Base, Saipan.

vii. The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before March 8, 2010 at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian.

U.S. PROBATION OFFICE
DISTRICTS OF GUAM
AND THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: Vacancy Announcement No: GUP 10-001

Position Title:	**U.S. Probation Officer**
Type of Appointment:	**Full-Time Permanent**
Classification Level:	Court Personnel System - Grade CL-26 to CL-28
Salary Range:	$38,331 to $63,119 (Salary commensurate with experience plus 20.94% COLA, which is subject to change)
Area of Consideration:	All Sources
Opening Date:	February 16, 2010
Closing Date:	March 5, 2010 (close of business - 5pm)
Location of Vacancy:	**Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**

Position Overview

The U.S. Probation Officer serves in the judiciary law enforcement position and assists in the administration of justice and promotes community safety, conducts investigations, supervises persons on probation, parole, supervised release, pre-release, and pretrial services, and interacts with collateral agencies to gather information, prepare reports, and present recommendations to the Court. The incumbent will work in the U.S. Probation Office, Saipan, District of the Northern Mariana Islands. Work is performed under the supervision of a U.S. Probation Officer Specialist and the Deputy Chief U.S. Probation Officer.

Within the first six months of employment, the incumbent will be required to participate in a six (6) week National Training Institute at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) program located in Charleston, South Carolina.

Representative Duties and Responsibilities (summarized)

1) Conduct investigations and prepare reports for the Court with recommendations, which requires interviewing offenders/defendants and their families, as well as collecting background data from various sources. An integral part of this process is the interpretation and application of policies and procedures, statutes, Federal Rules of Criminal Procedures, and may include U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, Monographs, and relevant case law; 2) Enforce court-ordered supervision conditions and implement supervision strategies; 3) Maintain personal contact with defendants and offenders; 4) Investigate employment, sources of income, lifestyle, and associates to assess risk and needs; 5) Address substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, and similar problems and implement the necessary treatment or violation proceedings, through assessment, monitoring, and counseling; 6) Collect and conduct urinalysis tests of offenders/defendants following established procedures and protocols; 7) Maintain paper and computerized records of test results, including chain of custody of urinalysis testing materials; 8) Respond to judicial officer's request for information and advice; 9) Testify in court as to the basis for factual findings and (if warranted) guideline applications; 10) Maintain detailed written records of case activity; 11) Analyze financial documents and activities and take appropriate action.; 12) Interview victim(s) and provide victim impact statements to the court and ensure compliance with Mandatory Victims Restitution Act; 13) Conduct presentence investigations and respond to any objections, which may include resolving disputed issues and presenting unresolved issues to the Court for resolution; 14) Assess offenders'/defendants' level of risk and needs, and develop strategies for controlling and correcting risks; 15) Communicate with other organizations and persons (such as the U.S. Parole Commission, Bureau of Prisons, law enforcement, treatment agencies, and attorneys) concerning offenders'/defendants' behavior and conditions of supervision; 16) Identify and investigate violations and implement appropriate alternatives and sanctions, report violations of the conditions of supervision, and prepare written reports of violation matters and make recommendations for disposition; 17) Testify at court or parole hearings; 18) Knowledge of, and compliance with, the Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees and court confidentiality requirements; 19) Ability to consistently demonstrate sound ethics and judgment; 20) Participate in and contribute to on-going training programs, and have a working knowledge in outcome driven/evidence based practices; and 21) Perform other duties as assigned.

Important information regarding Applicant Requirements and Qualifications; Specialized Experience; Medical Requirements and Maximum Entry Age; and Medical Examination, Drug Screening, and Background Investigation is described in the complete announcement and is available at our website at http://www.gup.uscourts.gov.

Application Procedure

Qualified applicants must submit an original and four copies of each of the following: 1) letter of interest; 2) resume; 3) letters from three professional references; 4) letters from three personal references; and 5) a completed AO 78 (Application for Employment) to:

Vacancy Announcement GUP 10-001
Rossanna Villagomez-Aguon
Chief U.S. Probation Officer
U.S. Probation Office – Districts of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands
Horiguchi Building, Rm.4D
P.O. Box 502089
Saipan, MP 96950
671-473-9201

The complete announcement and the AO 78 (Application for Employment) are available on our website at http://www.gup.uscourts.gov. Incomplete application documents will not be considered. The U.S. Probation Office reserves the right to amend or withdraw any announcement without written notice to applicants.

All application documents must be received at the U.S. Probation Office address above no later than Friday, March 5, 2010, at 5:00 p.m. Applications will not be accepted via email or facsimile. Untimely applications will not be considered. The most qualified applicants will be invited to, and must be physically present for, a personal interview. Travel expenses and relocation expenses will not be reimbursed. All application information will be subject to verification.

The U.S. Probation Office is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XX, Issue No. 44

Published daily at 2/F JP Centre,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Worth a try on nuclear power

WASHINGTON—"Obama doubles down on nuclear energy," wrote an environmental blogger after the president's State of the Union address last month. Actually, it's more like he tripled down. After his speech, he proposed increasing the size of the federal loan guarantee program for building nuclear power plants from $18 billion to $54 billion, and this week he backed two proposed reactors in Georgia—which would be the first built in decades—promising that this would just be the first of many such announcements.

The merits of nuclear power have been debated for years. Such power has drawbacks, not least the waste that reactors produce and that the government cannot decide where to store. But given that nuclear power produces essentially no carbon emissions, it's an appealing option for consistent and relatively clean electricity generation.

Ideally, the government should make as few choices as possible about which clean-carbon technologies to promote. The best way to move to a carbon-free economy is to put an appropriate price on emissions and let the market take over.

But carbon tax or no, the president is right to signal that he will unfreeze the regulatory process, which, in concert with public discomfort, has stymied the industry for decades. And there is a reasonable argument that nuclear should get this federal push. Though nuclear may well be more cost-efficient than its critics allege, huge upfront construction costs scare off investors. If loan guarantees for the first batch of new plants help demonstrate that reactors can be built without the delays and cost overruns that have characterized some nuclear projects, capital will come to nuclear without as much governmental support in the future and without taxpayers actually spending much.

A 2003 Massachusetts Institute of Technology report, which its authors updated last year, reckons that nuclear might even compete with cheap fossil fuel generation under such circumstances. That's an outcome anyone concerned about climate change should support. In the process, Obama also might buy some goodwill among pro-nuclear Republicans as he presses Congress to pass climate-change legislation. It's worth a try.

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DON'T WORRY, MR. PRESIDENT... WE'RE NOT RUNNING FROM A FIGHT!
WE'RE NOT RUNNING FOR THE HILLS!
AND WE'RE CERTAINLY NOT RUNNING FOR COVER!
HITCH
TELEGRAM & GAZETTE
WE'RE NOT RUNNING, PERIOD.
DEMS
BAYH SAYS 'BYE
JOINS KENNEDY, DODD, OTHERS IN BOWING OUT

Wanted: Senior citizens to guide youth

By ANTHONY PELLEGRINO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is the former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

Wanted: Senior citizens to guide the youth of our community. Share your knowledge and experience with them. Pass on the past and help build the future**.** If we truly believe that youth are the future of the CNMI, then we had better begin guiding youth to excel better than we have.

Almost daily many of us lament that our youth have little motivation to learn or to do anything. This is may be true, but whose fault is it and how can we correct it? Youth need guidance to succeed. They must be motivated and have role models. Hasn't this been true of all of us throughout our lives? What would have happened to us if we hadn't had role models and people to motivate us?

We elders are a walking treasure house of experience. Let's begin to share it. How many of us older citizens are sitting alone somewhere rusting away? How many of us older citizens feel useless with nothing to do? Consider sharing your experience and knowledge. Youth needs you! Walk with me as we discuss how you and I can be a vital and influencing force.

There is a definite need for you to help the youth. They need you, seniors, with your long experience and knowledge. The youth need you to guide them and show them a better path than you and I have walked. Without our firm guiding hands, how can youth build a better and prosperous community?

Daily we hear and see many of our youths with no direction in life—no skills with which to obtain decent jobs. In the end many end up in prisons. Others marry and their off springs end up the same as their mothers and fathers. Without an educated citizenry how can the CNMI hope to become prosperous? We the elders must take up the challenge and share our past world with them.

The closely knit family that you and I grew up in has sadly disintegrated because of changes in our lifestyle. Today many "future retirees" are working, leaving the young alone most of the time. Many of our youth have been denied the value and dignity of work because of the abundance of cheap imported labor which has discouraged them from seeking any kind of employment. Our youth have become a society of dependents relying on others to do their work.

Though we are senior citizens, we must take up the challenge. We, the elders, must motivate our youth. We must urge them to build a better life than we have. We must lift them upon our shoulders and show them new horizons. We must part the curtains to give them a visionary view of what can be. You and I have much to share both good and bad. As the Bible says: "Do not hide your light under a bushel. But let it shine forth."

Our words of wisdom and experience can change attitudes that could save their lives. We must become the mentors of youth. Someone once told me that what we do for ourselves passes away when we do. But when we do acts for others, the acts live on. In simple words, we will have shaped the future.

When I hear people, working for the government or a private company, lament that they can hardly wait for retirement, I feel sad for them. What they are really saying is that their work is a bore and uninteresting, but they persist just waiting for that retirement day. All they live for is the end of their misery which is supposed to come after twenty years.

When retirement comes, they are disappointed because they realize that their lives may have been meaningless. So over the years they are live a life of misery. I am reminded of a saying: "Many men die at twenty-five but are not buried until seventy-five." Sad! What has happened to our lives that we feel so burned out?

You and I have lived long and seen many things happen around us, both good and bad. We have experienced sadness, happiness, successes, disappointments, failures, marriages, borne children and have lived fruitful lives. These are the things we have to share with the youth trailingg behind us. We are the living treasures of the past. To build a solid future, one must understand and know the past. We can guide the new builders.

I beg you—do not turn away from the youth who need our experience and knowledge. Share the treasures we have accumulated over the years. Turn whatever disappointments and failures we may have about our own lives into productive assistance to youth. Share any successes we may have enjoyed. Ask: what can I do and how?

Several ways we can assist: go to the schools and tell the principals that we want to help guide his students. Tell the principals we wish to share our experience with the students. We can ask our pastors to allow us to form a church group to encourage the youth of that parish to meet and discuss religious problems. We can organize youth groups in our communities and hold regular forums in which we discuss political, social, and other subjects. Go to sports events and meet the players while cheering on their playing. Go to DYS and the Correctional Center and ask to work with the inmates sharing whatever experiences we may possess.

I invite you to visit the Northern Marianas Trades Institute and offer your life or trade experiences with our students. Here you will realize need for your help. We have students who have been neglected and have no direction in life but are searching for one. Your

See WANTED on Page 13

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

ecodemocracy

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Vergara is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune*'s Opinion Section.*

I intentionally kept the title of this reflection in lower case just to highlight what is being referred to as a common process more than a rare matter, though such distinction are but refinements of the mind and hardly sliceable in reality.

Obama's announcement of funding the second coming of toxic nukes left a chilling effect on my support of a continuing freeze on that delicate molecular process, assurances of safe technology notwithstanding, and having seen the White House's desire to appear "practical and realistic," the initiative does not come as a surprise.

In the frozen landscape of *Dong Bei,* China are numerous coal-fired plants and dwellings in Manchuria's coal-rich plains, shatting this shutterbug's ideal bowl of still life and living canvass. To be sure, the wintry sights elicited memories of picturesque mid-Atlantic Appalachia, but I also recall high incidence of respiratory ailments and other exotic maladies triggered by the atmosphere's toxicity. The spouted elements by the exhaust stacks and chimneys release more than their share of carcinogens in their white billowing steam; they also emit carbon and other chemicals into the planet's atmosphere, contributing to greenhouse effect, the present climate change, the thawing of the polar caps, and the guaranteed loss of real estate among low-lying islands and lands just slightly above the shore lines.

Again, Obama's dilemma in also supporting clean coal (a technological oxymoron) in meeting the energy requirements of the nation, does not allay our fears that we have polluted beyond the point of no return our habitat and our children's inheritance. Climate change with expected disastrous consequences is no longer a matter of whether or not but when the catastrophic damages will be existentially internalized to merit universal alarm. Various proposed strategies of altering lifestyles do not bode well with the comfortable urban hearths of consumer America whose energy requirements utilizes more than half of the planet's energy resource.

This deep awareness in the biological interrelatedness of all of life across planetary geography, and the integrity of all supporting structures, elements, and processes in the planet and the universe, constitutes the "eco" in our title – ecology as a scientific term, and "ecozoic" as a metaphysical category. The term 'ecodemocracy' is not used here for progressive capitalists' economic socialism, nor social democracy; it is the amorphous great turning, the paradigm shift that is universally happening in the human psyche evolutionarily working out its manifestations in our daily planetary life.

A young Chinese student wanted me to teach him English. "We are taught language in order to pass a test," he said of his schooling in China. "I want to learn how to communicate effectively," he added. I am facilitating a teachers' course on teaching strategies and classroom management, and I am very clear that if we are not too fixated to the anxiety-laden NCLB's narrow assessment methods of test measures, into teaching our young the art and discipline of living a life, our classrooms might still get the chance of being a nest for diverse human creativity rather than as clinics in molding uniform clerks and robotic technicians.

At the individual level, the ecozoic influence appears in the re-evaluation of professional careers versus the immensely motivational attraction of what used to be referred to as 'a calling,' e.g., the healing profession. Understanding reality to be more than the sum of individual experience and the essential constructs created in response to it, then we are saved from merely 'careening' (etymology derived from the same root word for 'career') on shallow waters of existence into a fuller grasp of the awe and wonder, the immeasurable depth, height, and breath of human life.

Conscious Buddhists (and other religious people who are discontented from just mindlessly performing the rituals and rites of their traditions) locate selfishness in operating ones life with 'a small mind.' Meditation and contemplation has worked itself into the workplace where managers 'center' their minds before launching into the requirements of resource allocation, product creation and distribution, and services provision. Minding the mind, its limits and posibilities is happily gaining adherents. Compare that to our preoccupation with tailoring our children's lives to fit the needs of trade, commerce and industry, of law and order enforcement and regulation, and we have students pursuing careers rather than listening to the muse of their callings!

Barriers between races continues to be an embarrassment of all traditions, and when we take the categories of *taotao tano* and *taotao tasi* as exclusive preferential ethnic and cultural categories, we are operating in ancient prejudices rather than on what we now know—that 97 percent of homo sapiens' DNA are similar. Alas, MLK, Jr.'s observation that Sunday's eleventh hour is the most segregated hour in America remains a continuing embarrassment even to the most ecumenical, progressive and liberal of Christendom's congregations.

Building relationships in the social sector has become a planetary phenomenon with the harnessing of the power of social networking made possible by air travel, rapid land and ocean transit systems, and the Internet. To be sure, the tentacles of our relatedness are still skating on thin ice but when articles like this are perused in Saudi Arabia and Lima, NYC and Mumbai, and the sunshine of Florida sometimes casts light on the dark nooks of Saipan, we know that a new level of relating has evolved. In fact, when a local Coffee shop recently began encouraging its customers to keep laptops in their bags and get to meet their neighbors over coffee, the social networking is getting glocalized!

Ecozoic democracy is discovering a new dynamism in evolutionary spirituality as well, to the great consternation of many capes, miters and gowns; the human landscape is now lit by the glowing red lanterns of a new age. Whether we respond to this new reality and process as being personally called into, or whether we shall locate to a comfortable career niche in the back rooms of a declining post-civilization that regards value in social status, security in retirement, and virtue in material abundance, remains a choice we all individually need to make.

Democracy remains today's revolution. Make an ecozoic choice. Make a difference.

Why there's too much partisanship

By EZRA KLEIN
(c) 2010, The Washington Post

Ezra Klein blogs about economic and domestic policy for The Washington Post at washingtonpost.com/ezraklein.

WASHINGTON—The White House health-care summit on Thursday is supposed to mark a return to politics as it should be practiced—the president leading the legislative process, the two parties talking things out, bipartisanship flowering, order restored.

Chances are, however, it won't work out that way. The summit is a result of, not the solution to, the problems afflicting national politics. And for all the rhetoric about bipartisanship, it's probably going to make the partisan sniping worse.

For months, members of Congress have complained that the president should take a more active role in the health-care reform process. But the president of the United States is not, as we sometimes seem to think, the president of the United States Congress. He can sign or veto a bill, but that's about it. The president's powers within the legislative process—as opposed to after its completion—are unofficial and informal. He can give a speech or invite congressional leaders to the White House for a chat, but he has no firm control over the proceedings. Legislating is the legislature's job.

What the president can do, however, is make that job harder. Republicans and Democrats don't agree on much, but they do agree that Washington is increasingly paralyzed ... by their inability to agree on much. Last week, Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind. got so frustrated that he just quit. "There is too much partisanship and not enough progress," he lamented. "Too much narrow ideology and not enough practical problem-solving." ("Too much partisanship and not enough progress" being the sort of airy haiku that passes for profundity in Washington these days.)

But why is there so much partisanship and so little progress? At least in part, we can blame the president.

According to data gathered by University of Maryland political scientist Frances Lee, when the president—and not just this particular president, but any president—takes a public position on an issue, the chances of a party-line vote on the matter skyrocket. If we're talking about health, labor, defense or immigration policy, the chance that Democrats and Republicans will stay in their separate corners increases by 20 to 30 percent. On foreign aid and international affairs, the likelihood of a party-line vote increases by more than 65 percent when the president has weighed in.

The most telling statistic comes when the vote is on "nonideological" issues on which neither party has an obvious position. (Take space exploration — there's no uniquely liberal take on checking out Mars.) Even these matters are 30 percent more likely to result in a party-line vote when the president mentions his preference. After all, the president is the leader of his party, and the other party can't win unless the public sours on the president. That's not going to happen if the opposition routinely hands him accomplishments.

To get an idea of the cost of cooperation, imagine that the guy in the cubicle next to you is not only competing with you for a promotion, but might lose his job if the boss likes your work. Do you think he's going to sing your praises at the next staff meeting?

People talk a lot about how much the public hates Congress, but their antipathy to the institution isn't very important when they vote. "When it comes to choosing candidates for Congress," writes Alan Abramowitz, a political scientist at Emory University who specializes in elections, "it is opinions of the president's performance that matter." So the opposition party — whether Democratic or Republican — has to stomp opinions of the president down into the mud. And it does that by killing his agenda.

That is why bipartisanship is unlikely to take root at Thursday's summit. The more that health-care reform is associated with the president, the less likely it is that any Republicans will support it. At best, the summit won't worsen the situation; the issue is so linked to Obama already that, for GOP lawmakers, supporting him on it would be tantamount to throwing the next election.

In theory, all this suggests that Obama might want to back off a bit. But we've come to expect more from our president. The voters, the media and members of Congress complain if he isn't smack in the center of every legislative initiative. That leaves us two choices: Either we let him fade into the background, or we're going to have to change the rules so that the majority can govern successfully even when it is not in the minority's interest to let that happen. Last week, Bayh suggested dropping the filibuster-proof majority to 55 votes. That's the sort of proposal that could actually do some good. (It's a shame Bayh didn't stick around to see it through.)

Thursday's summit, by contrast, might make for good TV, but it won't solve our problems.

Pottanmonedan Federat

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

DelRosario is the secretary of the Department of Public Works

Mampos ti umaya hafa ha petsisige i Presidenten America as Barak Obama pot para una` guaha mas chochu. Ha sañgan una kosa lau taigue i areglu ni siña ma-establese mas chochu. Guiya este na konsepto i mafananaan Finkas yan Chochu. Debi u gaige i finenina para u inestablese i segundu.

Madiskukute na biahe segundu aktu (stimulus) `sino fina fiñkas ni siña chumoneg inestablesen chochu gi enteru estados. Lau dañkulu este na kuenta sa` siempre umayau Estados Unidos de America biyon pot biyon pesus talu ginen otru nasion siha para u kubre este na planu.

Na chatsaga i ha petsisige sa` siempre u basnag gi un` dañkulu na hoyu `nai ti siña i federat ha apase tatte i dibiña gi otru nasion siha. I inañgoghon otru nasion gi fuetsan ekonomian iya America siempre lokue u poduñg yangin taya inadahe. Esta pagu guaha 15 miyon na tautau mantai chechu gi enteru 50 na estados.

■■■

I Gobietnon iya Guam as Señor Felix Camacho ha sañgan, dibuenamente sentimentoña pot dinaña Guam yan sankattan na Marianas guine gi alacha. Pot dos biahe mapunu este na propositu nu i tautau Guam. Lau ha lilie` si Gobietno Camacho bintahan dinaña kumu unu na tautau Marianas.

Mientras mauleg intensioña, guaha siha sustansiau na asuntu debi u fan mapega gi lamasa. Finenina, esta iya Marianas guaha inakonfotmaña yan federal gi hechuran Covenant Agreement. Iya Guam tai konstitusion ya solu I estau "unincoporated territory" na mau`udai. Maseha ñgaian na tiempu siña I federat mamatinas areglu sin konsientimenton tautau Guam. Iya Marianas, guaha probision gi papa` i Covenant Agreement `nai malimitte i fuetsan Congresson Estados Unidos de America guine na patte.

Un` asuntu na i manhobenta mauleg u tutuhon dumiskute pot para u guaha mas kinemprende gi papa payun este na asuntu.

■■■

I daibetes na chetnot sige ma-umenta gi entre tautauta. Layeye na taiguine masusede sa` deste antigu na komunidat Chamorro, modun ñalañg hayuña. Kumeke ileghu, payun sisteman natibu nu i tagpapa` na fuetsan neñkanu. Ha inklulusu este suni, kamuti, mendioka, baba`, nika, dagu yan choda.

Gi modetnu na modun linala`ta, ta tutuhon gumulusuni tatkilu na fuetsan neñkanu siha. Puru boka ni mifuetsa asukat. Estague fumababa sisteman natibu na tiempu. Esta ha` mas bokan hamburger, hinegsa`, pastre yan pan yan tinilada na gimen mames. Adumididi sige mañuha hit ginen tagpapa` na fuetsan neñkanu siha. Gi mismu tiempu, sige ha aminasa hit i nuebu na neñkanota.

Ñgaian `nai siña este na problema ma-ataha? Gaige solu gi petsonat na disision kada unu. Hagu inkatgau nu i hinemlomu ya hagu ha` solu siña fumatinas disision hafa para un` kanu ni homlu siha na neñkanu. Bula siempre chetnot "online" ke "bordernline" mamis haga.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mostly sunny with a slight chance of showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼76°	▲84° ▼76°

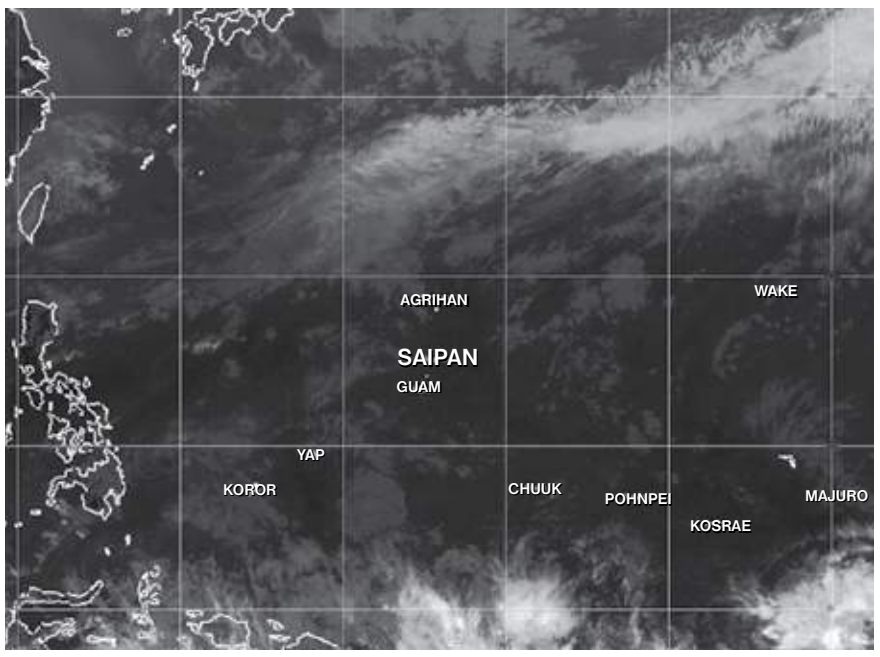
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Sunny	▲83	▼75
Palau	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼77
Yap	Mostly Sunny	▲86	▼76
Chuuk	Showers	▲89	▼79
Pohnpei	Sunny	▲87	▼75
Kosrae	Partly Sunny	▲87	▼75
Majuro	Partly Sunny	▲85	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲74	▼62
Beijing	Sunny	▲49	▼38
Hong Kong	Showers	▲74	▼69
Honolulu	Showers	▲78	▼66
London	Rain/Snow	▲43	▼35
Los Angeles	Mostly Cloudy	▲62	▼50
Manila	Partly Sunny	▲87	▼75
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	▲77	▼55
Miami	Mostly Cloudy	▲81	▼63
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲41	▼30
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	▲53	▼41
Paris	Showers	▲45	▼29
Pusan	Cloudy	▲58	▼40
Rome	Rain	▲58	▼51
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲53	▼39
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	▲60	▼49
Seoul	Cloudy	▲50	▼32
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	▲48	▼40
Washington, DC	Rain/Snow	▲38	▼30

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2010
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front enters the discussion area near Minami Tori Shima at 25N155E and curves westward through a weak circulation near 22N138E then continues southwestward beyond 18N130E. Extensive cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 300 miles north of this boundary. Trade-wind convergence is producing cloudiness and widely scattered showers near Palau within 150 miles of a line from 10N132E to EQ140E. Trade-wind convergence is also causing scattered showers and a few isolated thunderstorms across Tarawa south of a line from 1N168E to 2N177E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

2:02 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
6:29 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
12:10 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
8:08 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.0 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:38 AM	6:23 PM
Tuesday	6:38 AM	6:23 PM
Wednesday	6:37 AM	6:23 PM
Thursday	6:37 AM	6:24 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	6:24 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	11:46 AM	12:15 AM
Tuesday	12:43 PM	1:14 AM
Wednesday	1:44 PM	2:14 AM
Thursday	2:48 PM	3:12 AM
Friday	3:53 PM	2:08 AM

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The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

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- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
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- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

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- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
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- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Saturday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $160. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 28, 2010

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT
NW638	8:00am	10:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily
NW289	5:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am	
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

CA8282	3:15am	7:00am	1, 5

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 4, 5, 7 via PUS
C09603/893	3:15pm	9:10pm	3, 5 via GUM-PALAU
OZ606/715	3:20pm	11:30pm	7 via ICN
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:35am+1	Daily via NRT effective Jan 25
NW277	8:30pm	1:00am+1	3, 6
NW639	9:00pm	1:35am+1	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW290	10:00am	2:35pm	Daily
NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	9:00pm	1:35am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm	
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

CA8281	6:40pm	1:55am+1	4, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4, 6 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
C0892/9596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	3,5 via PALAU-GUM
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2 ,4 ,6, 7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2, 4 ,6 ,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CA: China Airlines; CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

In praise of Rahm

By DANA MILBANK
(c) 2010, The Washington Post

WASHINGTON—Let us now praise Rahm Emanuel.

No, seriously.

It is the current fashion to blame President Obama's disappointing first year on his chief of staff. "First, remove Rahm Emanuel," writes Leslie Gelb in the Daily Beast, because he lacks "the management skills and discipline to run the White House."

The Financial Times's Ed Luce reports that the "famously irascible" Emanuel has "alienated many of Mr. Obama's closest outside supporters," while the New America Foundation's Steve Clemons lumps Emanuel in with the "Core Chicago Team Sinking Obama Presidency."

They join liberal interests who despised Emanuel long before he branded them "retarded." Jane Hamsher of firedoglake.com, together with conservative activist Grover Norquist, demanded a Justice Department investigation into Emanuel, who is "far too compromised to serve as gatekeeper to the president."

As Emanuel would say: What the (expletive deleted)?

Clearly, "Rahmbo" has no shortage of enemies in this town, and with Obama's approval rating dipping below 50 percent, they have ammunition. But sacking Emanuel is the last thing the president should do.

Obama's first year fell apart in large part because he didn't follow his chief of staff's advice on crucial matters. Arguably, Emanuel is the only person keeping Obama from becoming Jimmy Carter.

Obama chose the profane former Clinton adviser for a reason. Where the president is airy and idealistic, Rahm is earthy and calculating. One thinks big; the other, a former House Democratic Caucus chair, understands the congressional mind, in which small stuff counts for more than broad strokes.

Obama's problem is that his other confidants — particularly Valerie Jarrett and Robert Gibbs, and, to a lesser extent, David Axelrod — are part of the Cult of Obama. In love with the president, they believe he is a transformational figure who needn't dirty his hands in politics.

The president would have been better off heeding Emanuel's counsel. For example, Emanuel bitterly opposed former White House counsel Greg Craig's effort to close the Guantanamo Bay prison within a year, arguing that it wasn't politically feasible. Obama overruled Emanuel, the deadline wasn't met, and Republicans pounced on the president and the Democrats for trying to bring terrorists to U.S. prisons. Likewise, Emanuel fought fiercely against Attorney General Eric Holder's plan to send Khalid Sheik Mohammed to New York for a trial. Emanuel lost, and the result was another political fiasco.

Obama's greatest mistake was failing to listen to Emanuel on health care. Early on, Emanuel argued for a smaller bill with popular items, such as expanding health coverage for children and young adults, that could win some Republican support. He opposed the public option as a needless distraction.

The president disregarded that strategy and sided with Capitol Hill liberals who hoped to ram a larger, less popular bill through Congress with Democratic votes only. The result was, as the world now knows, disastrous.

Had it gone Emanuel's way, a politically popular health-care bill would have passed long ago, leaving plenty of time for other attractive priorities, such as efforts to make college more affordable. We would have seen a continuation of the momentum of the first half of 2009, when Obama followed Emanuel's strategy and got 11 substantive bills on his desk before the August recess.

Instead, Congress has ground to a halt, on climate legislation, Wall Street reforms and virtually everything else. Emanuel, schooled by Bill Clinton, knew what the true believers didn't: that bite-sized proposals add up to big things.

Contrast Emanuel's wisdom with that of Jarrett, in charge of "intergovernmental affairs and public engagement" — two areas of conspicuous failure. Jarrett also brought in Desiree Rogers as White House social secretary; the Salahi embarrassment ensued. Then there's Gibbs. It's hard to make the case that you're a post-partisan president when your on-camera spokesman is a hyper-partisan former campaign flack.

No wonder Emanuel has set up his own small press operation and outreach function to circumvent the dysfunctional ones that Jarrett and Gibbs run. Obama needs an old Washington hand to replace Jarrett and somebody with gravitas on the podium to step in for Gibbs.

The failure of the president's message also reflects on his message maven, Axelrod, who is an adept strategist but blinded by Obama love. A good example was Obama's unproductive China trip in November. Jarrett, Gibbs and Axelrod went along as courtiers; Emanuel remained at his desk in Washington, struggling to keep alive the big health-care bill that he didn't want in the first place.

In hiring Emanuel, Obama avoided the mistakes of his Democratic predecessors, who first gave the chief of staff job to besotted loyalists. Now in trouble, Obama needs fewer acolytes and more action. Rahm should stay.

Letter to the Editor

To repeal Article XII, or not?

There are many questions and thoughts coming through my mind about this particular issue, Article XII. Is it necessary to revisit the matter and see how it can be an advantage or not to the indigenous population of the CNMI if we don't come to some conclusion about Article XII by 2011. To repeal, to retain, or to abolish altogether Article XII?

I would like to see all facts put before me prior to 2011. So far, I am only hearing a lot of voices in opposition not to remove, nor repeal Article XII. It would be necessary to listen to all facts before making a decision comes 2011. We should be open and be sensitive to absorb all the facts concerning this matter. We should listen to all the pros and cons of Article XII.

We must understand that for every polarity, there is a duality. For every good thing, there may lurk some bad things. It is not all good in this world. Even the present Article XII it its present state is not so good, although it's not bad too, simultaneously. But one thing is certain, we have to do something about it by 2011, or sooner if we have the choice. The time is ticking!

So please do not spoil yourself with one-track opinion. We have to be open to all facts both the pros and cons, to repeal or retain Article XII. I am so ignorant about the matter so even I must listen to both sides. This is very important since what we will be deciding on in 2011 is really not for the current generation, but for our children in the next, and next generation.

Two groups of people will be out to educate the public on the matter of Article XII. They represent the pros and cons of Article XII. Please open your mind to listen closely to both of them, then when 2011 comes, whoever convinces you to be of utmost advantage, utilize those facts presented to make your intelligent decision for our children in the next, and next generation, *En fin Serafin*.

Alexandro Sablan
Dandan

Special education: A good idea for all of us

In the course of my work with the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. and with the Public School System, I've had an extensive, or rather exhaustive, look into CNMI's Special Education program and many of the problems therein.

To be clear, there is a great deal of good coming out of the program through individualized efforts of numerous, highly-committed people who continually beat their heads against the wall trying to provide a *free, appropriate, public education* for every student with a disability. Additionally, there is a handful of persistent parents who refuse to accept anything less—if ever there was a case for the squeaky-wheel; it's the outspoken parents of children with disabilities who get the grease.

The program faces some unique, logistical challenges which are not easily fixed. Unfortunately, it is also plagued with other more deeply-rooted barriers from our society's psyche which include some illogical prejudices and a general devaluing of individuals with disabilities. Even people who work for our schools are more inclined to turn a blind-eye to deficiencies in the education of children with disabilities than those without as long as they can avoid the added burden of a formal complaint. But, as in the cases of our non-verbal children, who is going to complain?

So, the single most crucial factor in the delivery of special education services to eligible students with disabilities rests in the quality and efforts of the schools' personnel including but not limited to Administrators, Teachers and Teacher Aides. At a minimum, all people who work at a school have to care about the well-being of children in general. Beyond that, they have to understand the critical nature of the role they serve in the development of these children…special or otherwise, education is not synonymous with baby-sitting and a quality education is never half-ass. Still, with a long-standing history of misguided hiring and firing practices—it's who you know, not what you know—some schools are host to a myriad of check-collectors, people who couldn't care less about the students they work with. They find a way to entrench themselves in various corners of our school sites with the primary occupation of trying to do as little as possible despite the children in their care.

Still, some administrators will harbor these negligent, non-performers for various reasons including but not limited to an overburdensome, bureaucracy of human resource management which often makes it difficult to replace people in a timely manner—the myth is that a warm body is better than no body at all. In truth, I would rather staff one highly motivated, competent person who pushes to be the best at what he does than multiple, slackers who spend the day waiting to punch the time-clock…for sure, our kids stand to benefit far more from the one.

Above all else, when we choose to work in a school setting, we should be mindful that every minute in contact with students is a teachable moment—kids do hang on our every move whether it seems like it or not, so there are no practice runs for our children in school. Disability or otherwise, a special education is a good idea for all of us.

For more on the rights of students with disabilities or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), please feel free to contact NMPASI at (670) 235-7273/4 [voice] / 235-7278 [tty] / 235-7275 [fax] or via the internet at www.nmpasi.com.

Jim Rayphand
Via e-mail

WANTED

From Page 10

outstretched hand would be motivating.

The older women could teach young women how to be good mothers. You can volunteer at the battered women's shelter. These are only a few of the many things we can do. Consider more ways of becoming an important and strong influence on our youth. Reach out to young people wherever we meet them with an outstretched hand and a smile. We will be welcomed and needed. Once we decide that we wish to volunteer ourselves, many ways and means to do so will open up

For those who do not know, I am leaning on 80 years but I feel that I have many more miles to go before I call it quits. Yes, you and I have to live with aches and pains as we age. Forget them! Join with me and share with youth all the lifelong treasures of our exciting lives.

Don't be a burned out candle to be thrown aside. Become a beacon of hope guiding our youth. If you don't, who will? Pass on the baton for a prosperous tomorrow to them. Show them that the CNMI can be a better place to live than in the past. Your encouragement will do that. Our youth need you!

Consider these words of Alfred Lord Tennyson from his poem "Ulysses." These words are spoken by Ulysses to his men who roamed the seas in search of adventure when they were young but now old. Ulysses is telling them that they, though old, still have much work to do. So he pleads with them to go with him and once more roam the vast oceans as there still are many adventures to conquer:

"How dull it is to pause, to make and end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!...
"...you and I are old. Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods."

"Come, my friends, 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world....
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are,—
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in Will to strive,
To seek, to find, and not to Yield!"

Join with me to guide our youth to great heights. Let's lift them high on our shoulders and show them the future that waits. Our legacy to youth must be one of hope and dreams of a greater day and a greater CNMI!

Business

Japan hopes Toyoda can burnish Toyota's image

TOKYO (AP)—Japan is looking to Toyota president Akio Toyoda's appearance before U.S. lawmakers next week to help burnish an image marred by a flood of recalls—and to prevent grievances over the issue from fanning broader political tensions.

With his company facing the worst crisis in its 70-year history, Toyoda will appear before the U.S. House of Representatives Oversight and Government Reform Committee next Wednesday. By issuing an invitation, the committee had essentially forced Toyoda, who earlier had said he did not plan to attend, into testifying.

Commentaries Saturday and statements by officials here since Toyoda announced he would accept the request to testify reflect the unease over possible wider damage from Toyota Motor Corp.'s troubles.

"I hope Toyota will soon regain the trust of their customers around the world," Japan's Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada told reporters Friday.

"Although this is a matter of one individual company, we wish to back them up as much as we can as it could become a national issue," Okada said.

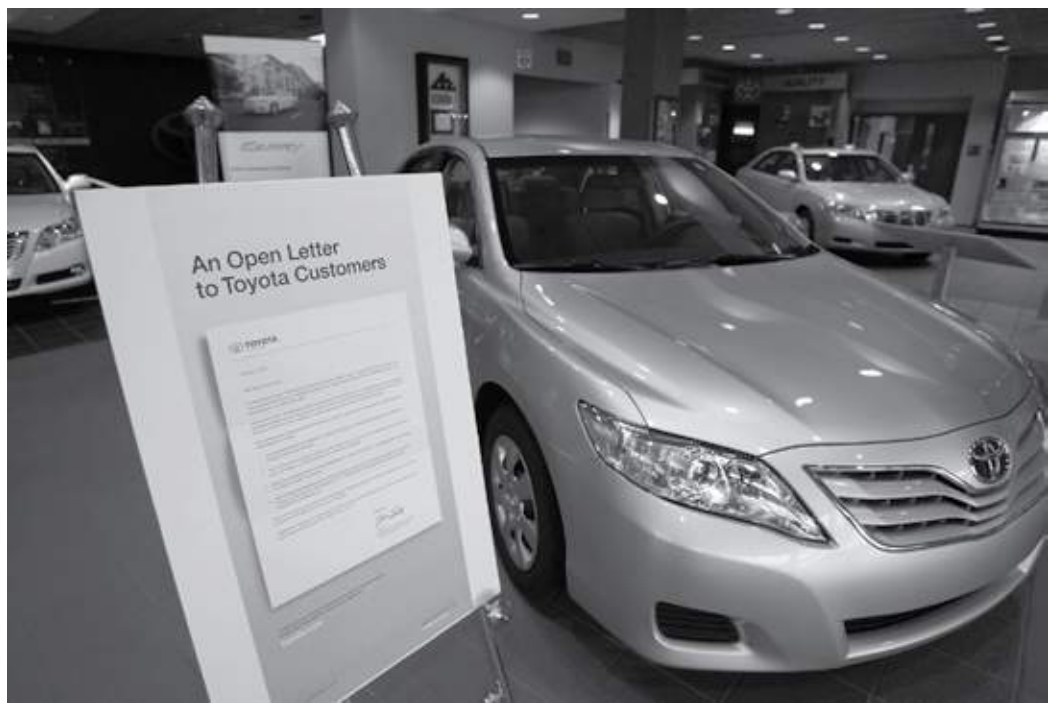
Japan's industry and transport ministers also publicly applauded the decision, saying that Toyoda should take the opportunity to help reassure and mollify customers angered over the recalls of about 8.5 million vehicles over sticking gas pedals, accelerators jamming in floor mats and momentarily unresponsive brakes.

"We should not make this issue a political matter between the Japanese and U.S. governments," said Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Masayuki Naoshima, himself a former Toyota group employee.

While so far the recalls remain a safety and business issue, Japanese officials are keen to ensure it stays that way at a time when ties with Washington already are strained by a dispute over plans to move a U.S. Marine base on the southern island of Okinawa.

Many in Japan have voiced suspicions that the uproar over the recalls might be driven by political motives, given the U.S. government's stake in General Motors Co. and its costly bailouts for the domestic motor industry.

But opinion favoring Toyoda's choice to publicly answer questions over the company's handling of the problems leading to the recalls seems for now to be outweighing dismissals of the crisis as evidence of "Japan bashing."



AP

The open letter that was sent to Toyota owners is displayed in the visitor center at the Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky plant in Georgetown, Ky., Thursday, Feb. 18, 2010.

Pilots offer to talk with Lufthansa before strike

BERLIN (AP)—The cockpit pilots union offered Saturday to meet with the chief of Lufthansa AG to try to head off a four-day strike beginning Monday that could cause headaches for thousands of travelers.

The union offer to meet with Lufthansa Chief Executive Wolfgang Mayrhuber came after Germany's transport minister urged the two sides to return to talks and avoid a strike that could damage the country's economy.

Lufthansa said in a statement that it is willing to talk with the pilots under certain conditions. It was not immediately clear if the meeting would take place.

Lufthansa has already canceled some 600 flights ahead of the strike and is scrambling to rebook travelers on partner airlines or trains.

"Lufthansa is doing everything in its power to inform its customers as soon as possible and offer them alternative travel options," the company said on its Web site.

Travelers who are unable to reschedule are being reimbursed for their tickets, it said.

The airline, Germany's largest, estimates the strike could cost it as much as euro100 million ($135.19 million).

The union is urging some 4,500 pilots who fly for Lufthansa, Lufthansa Cargo and Germanwings to walk off their jobs from February 22-25 to press the airline for increased job security for pilots in Germany and abroad.

"We can talk immediately about the issue of job security for Lufthansa pilots when Cockpit drops its unreasonable and legally impossible demand for the extension of German labor conditions abroad," said Lufthansa board member Christoph Franz in a statement.

Governors brace for more economic turmoil

WASHINGTON (AP)—On the recession's front lines, governors are struggling to chart the road ahead for states staggered by unrelenting joblessness and cut-to-the-bone budgets even as Washington reports signs of economic growth.

"The worst probably is yet to come," warned Gov. Jim Douglas, R-Vt., chairman of the National Governors Association, at the group's meeting Saturday. He called the situation "fairly poor" in most states, adding that it "doesn't look too good."

Such uncertainty weighed heavily over the governors' weekend meeting even though health care—and how states can address skyrocketing costs—was the intended focus. That's recognized as one of the biggest issues affecting states' long-term solvency.

As the meeting opened, first lady Michelle Obama sought governors' help in her campaign to tackle childhood obesity, though she acknowledged, "I know that many of you are stretched thinner than ever in these times and don't actually have money to spare."

AP

National Governors Association (NGA) Chairman, Vermont Gov. James Douglas, speaks with reporters while NGA Vice-Chairman, West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin III, left, and Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer, right, look on at the start of the NGA's Winter Meeting in Washington, Saturday, Feb. 20, 2010.

It's true.

States face budget holes totaling $134 billion over the next three years, according to the governors, who explained that tax collections keep declining as Medicaid costs soar. High unemployment persists. States cut 18,000 jobs in January alone and more job losses are anticipated. Because states are required to balance their budgets, shortfalls will be made up by raising taxes or fees or cutting services.

Neither is easy in an election year where 37 states are poised to vote for new chief executives.

While the national economy has grown in recent months, the situation is deteriorating in the states. People are feeling the fallout daily, from fewer services to higher fees. It's a trend consistent with other recessions; states usually experience their worst budget years in the two years after a recession ends.

"A year ago we were facing an economic abyss. The president pulled us back from the brink. But we have more to do," said Delaware Gov. Jack Markell, the head of the Democratic Governors Association.

There seemed to be unanimous agreement that job creation was the key to recovery in states.

"Our folks want to get back to work," said Gov. Chris Christie, R-N.J.

Added Gov. Martin O'Malley, D-Md.: "It's the only way that we're going to get out of this recession."

Senate report: Avandia maker knew of cardiac risks

NEW YORK (AP)—A Senate report said Saturday that drug maker GlaxoSmithKline knew of possible heart attack risks tied to Avandia, its diabetes medication, years before such evidence became public.

Sen. Max Baucus, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and Chuck Grassley, the committee's ranking Republican, released the report, which follows a two-year inquiry, on Saturday. They are also asking the U.S. Food and Drug Administration why it allowed a clinical trial of Avandia to continue even after the agency estimated that the drug caused 83,000 heart attacks between 1999 and 2007.

The agency ordered a warning to be included on Avandia's label in 2007, saying that it might increase the risk of heart attacks, though the data on those risk was inconclusive.

Soon afterwards Sen. Grassley, one of the FDA's toughest critics in Congress, disclosed that the agency's internal safety experts came within one vote of recommending a withdrawal of Avandia.

The Senate report suggests sharp disagreements remain at the FDA over how to handle Avandia's risks.

In a letter to FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg that was also released Saturday, the senators said the committee's report was based on researchers' studies of Avandia, internal GlaxoSmithKline documents and FDA documents. They said committee investigators had interviewed GlaxoSmithKline and agency employees as well as what it called anonymous whistleblowers.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Facebook status appears glitchy Saturday

NEW YORK (AP)—Facebook users have been complaining about problems at the social media site. Users in the U.S. and other countries reported problems beginning Saturday morning. Some could not log in, and the site was unusually slow and glitchy for others. Users in London, Bangkok and Mexico City reported problems. Many used Twitter to complain. Facebook spokesman Matt Hicks it was a "small percentage of users" who had problems accessing Facebook, their friends' profiles or specific site features because of an isolated server problem. At 6 p.m. Saturday, Facebook said it had restored access to the users who were having access problems.

Feds want leniency for Madoff's former chief aide

NEW YORK (AP)—A man who helped Wall Street swindler Bernard Madoff steal billions of dollars has earned himself friends in the Justice Department. In a letter made public Friday, federal prosecutors said Madoff's former chief aide Frank DiPascali had provided "substantial assistance" to investigators. They said they anticipated writing an "extraordinary" letter recommending leniency when he is sentenced for crimes including securities fraud and money laundering. The memo to the judge was initially written in December but remained sealed until Friday.

Britain's Brown says cuts debate key to election

LONDON (AP)—British Prime Minister Gordon Brown says the country's upcoming election will focus on whether immediate cuts to public spending are necessary to rein in the national deficit. Brown's governing Labour Party says it would postpone major cuts until 2011, hoping to stimulate economic growth. The main opposition Conservatives say that if elected, they would slash spending to tackle a deficit likely to top 170 billion pounds ($263 billion) this year. Brown said in prepared remarks before a Saturday speech to activists in Coventry, central England, that "we must protect and not cut front line services."

Nation

Live From Washington! It's Obama health care drama

WASHINGTON (AP)—Coming soon to daytime television: America's long-running civic drama over how to provide better health care to more of its people without breaking the bank.

President Barack Obama summons anxious Democrats and aloof Republicans to a White House summit Thursday—live on C-SPAN and perhaps cable—and gambles that he can save his embattled health care overhaul by the power of persuasion. Adversaries and allies alike were surprised by Obama's invitation to reason together at an open forum, as risky as it is unusual.

Ahead of the meeting, the White House will post on its Web site a health care plan that modifies the bill passed by Senate Democrats last year. The modification is an effort to address the concerns of their House counterparts.

The plan is important, but not as critical as the political skill Obama can apply to an impasse that seems close to hopeless in a pivotal congressional election year.

"It's a high-stakes situation for him more than anybody else," said Gerald Shea, the top health care adviser for the AFL-CIO. "If the judgment is either that it's a political farce, or if it fails to move the ball forward significantly ... that would be very damaging to the issue and to him."

A viewers' guide to the White House meeting, looking at Obama and his plan, Republicans in Congress and divided Democrats.

He has two main goals. One is to show the American people that the Democrats' health care plan is reasonable, and much of its complexity reflects the sprawling nature of the insurance system. The other is to argue that lockstep Republican opposition is not reasonable and could spoil a historic opportunity on a problem that concerns all Americans.

AP

President Barack Obama speaks during a fundraising event for Sen. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., in Denver, on Thursday, Feb. 18, 2010.

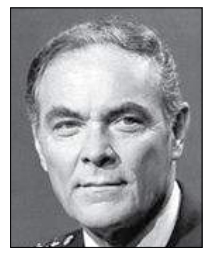
"I don't want to see this meeting turn into political theater, with each side simply reciting talking points and trying to score political points," the president said Saturday in his radio and Internet address. "What's being tested here is not just our ability to solve this one problem, but our ability to solve any problem."

Obama's main audience will be Democrats, who must overcome their divisions—and ease their qualms—to get a final bill. He will also tune his pitch to independents, who soured on the Democratic bills after initially being open to health care changes.

Thursday's meeting at Blair House—the presidential guest quarters across from the White House—comes nearly a year after Obama launched his drive to remake health care at an earlier summit he infused with a bipartisan spirit. The president will point out that Republicans have supported individual elements of the Democratic bills.

Alexander Haig remembered as soldier-statesman

WASHINGTON (AP)—Soldier and statesman, Alexander Haig never lived down his televised response to the 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan. Haig died Saturday at age 85 having held high posts in three Republican administrations and some of the U.S. military's top jobs.



Haig

Haig was a four-star Army general who served as a senior adviser to three presidents and had presidential ambitions of his own. He died early in the day at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore of complications from an infection, his family said. He was surrounded by his family, according to two of his children, Alexander and Barbara.

President Barack Obama praised Haig on Saturday as a public servant who "exemplified our finest warrior-diplomat tradition of those who dedicate their lives to public service."

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Haig "served his country in many capacities for many years, earning honor on the battlefield, the confidence of presidents and prime ministers, and the thanks of a grateful nation."

Haig's long and decorated military service launched the Washington career for which he is better known, including jobs in the Nixon, Ford and Reagan administrations.

Many Americans will remember the strong-willed Haig most vividly for what he later called his "poor choice of words." Hours after Reagan was shot, then-Secretary of State Haig went before the cameras intending, he said later, to reassure Americans that the White House was functioning.

"As of now, I am in control here in the White House, pending the return of the vice president," Haig said.

Dalai Lama doesn't fault Obama for low-key meeting

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—Just days after meeting with President Barack Obama, the Dalai Lama said Saturday that he was not offended by the low-key reception he received and understands that the president must be practical despite his stated commitment to championing human rights worldwide.

Tibet's exiled spiritual leader told The Associated Press that he recognizes Obama must juggle his desire to support the Dalai Lama's push for greater Tibetan autonomy with his concerns about angering China, a growing U.S. economic rival and hoped-for partner.

"No disappointment. The last six decades my heart hardened. I do not consider important political gestures. I don't care. The important is meet face-to-face," said the Dalai Lama, who was sometimes assisted by a translator.

AP

The Dalai Lama is seen during an interview with the Associated Press as a member of the security detail stands in the background during a visit to Southern California, in Beverly Hills, Calif., Saturday, Feb. 20, 2010.

"With President Clinton, the first meeting was a 'drop-in,'" he said. "People asked me the same question (then). I don't care."

The Dalai Lama made the remarks while in Los Angeles to support Whole Child International, an organization that advocates better care for orphans worldwide.

Obama hosted the Dalai Lama on Thursday in Washington, D.C., but kept the get-together off-camera and low-key in an attempt to avoid inflaming tensions with China.

IRS worker killed in crash was a loyal family man

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—The family of a longtime Internal Revenue Service employee killed when a pilot harboring an anti-IRS grudge flew his plane into his office remembered the Vietnam veteran Saturday as devoted family man who likely would have tried to save his co-workers from the burning building before escaping himself.

"He was full of life. Probably the best teacher I had in my life," Ken Hunter said of his father, 68-year-old Vernon Hunter. The elder Hunter had been missing and presumed dead since Thursday, when software engineer Andrew Joseph Stack III slammed his plane into the Austin building where Hunter worked as a manager for the IRS.

The crash caused a large fireball that destroyed much of the hulking glass building where Hunter's wife, Valerie, also worked as an IRS employee. She was not wounded.

Hunter was the only person besides Stack to die in the attack, and authorities officially notified the family they had identified his remains on Saturday, said Larry McDonald, a family friend and deacon at their church.

Stack, 53, apparently targeted the lower floors of the building that houses IRS offices after lashing out at the agency in a ranting manifesto posted on a Web site shortly before Thursday's attack. In the note, Stack claimed the government and the its tax code robbed him of his savings and ruined his career.

ASIAN BRIEFS

NASA: Weather iffy for space shuttle return Sunday

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)—Space shuttle Endeavour aimed for a Sunday night landing back at NASA's spaceport, but rainy and cloudy weather threatened to delay the astronauts' homecoming. Endeavour and its crew of six are returning from a bigger and certainly brighter International Space Station. They added a new room and a dome containing seven windows in a highly successful mission that won presidential praise. LeRoy Cain, chairman of the mission management team, said Saturday there's about a 50-50 chance—maybe a little better—that the weather will cooperate.

FBI investigating cruise ship death

GALVESTON, Texas (AP)—The FBI is investigating the death of a 32-year-old woman found in her room on a cruise ship. FBI special agent Shauna Dunlap tells the Galveston County Daily News that authorities are trying to determine whether the woman's death aboard the Carnival Ecstasy was the result of foul play. The ship's operator, Carnival Cruise Lines, said in a statement Saturday that the woman's body was found Tuesday. They said that after a preliminary investigation, no cause of death was determined and an autopsy will be performed to determine the cause of death.

The Carnival Ecstasy left Galveston on Monday and returned Saturday.

Ga. jury: Man guilty in Spelman student's death

ATLANTA (AP)—A jury has convicted a 22-year-old man of murder in the shooting death of a Georgia college student. Devonni Benton was also found guilty of two counts of aggravated assault Saturday in the September killing of Spelman College sophomore Jasmine Lynn. Prosecutors say Benton was in a fight outside a Clark Atlanta University dorm and fired at least six shots into the crowd, killing the Kansas City, Mo., native. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that Benton was sentenced to life plus 25 years in prison. Benton testified during the three-day trial that he was involved in the fight but was not the shooter.

Asia

Fighting rages as Karzai urges restraint from NATO

MARJAH, Afghanistan (AP)—U.S. Marines and Afghan soldiers advanced through poppy fields of Marjah on Saturday under withering gunfire from Taliban fighters shooting from mudbrick homes and compounds where families huddled in terror.

President Hamid Karzai urged NATO to do more to protect civilians during combat operations to secure Marjah, a southern Taliban stronghold and scene of the biggest allied ground assault of the eight-year war.

NATO forces have repeatedly said they want to prevent civilian casualties but acknowledged that it is not always possible. On Saturday, the alliance said its troops killed another civilian in the Marjah area, bringing the civilian death toll from the operation to at least 16.

Addressing the opening session of the Afghan parliament in Kabul, Karzai held up a picture of an 8-year-old girl who lost 12 relatives in a NATO rocket attack during the second day of the Marjah assault, which began Feb. 13.

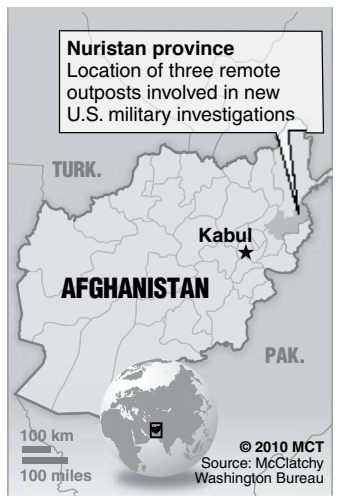
Karzai said NATO had made progress in reducing civilian casualties and thanked the top commander, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, for "standing with us honestly in this effort." But Karzai said more needed to be done to protect civilians caught up in the fighting.

AP

U.S. Marine Lt Scott Holub of Pasadena, MD and from 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment runs carrying an Afghan National Army soldier who was shot in the lower leg during a battle with the Taliban in Marjah in Afghanistan's Helmand province on Saturday Feb. 20, 2010.

"We need to reach the point where there are no civilian casualties," Karzai said. "Our effort and our criticism will continue until we reach that goal."

The Marjah operation is a major test of a new NATO strategy that stresses protecting civilians over routing insurgents as quickly as possible. It's also the first major ground operation since President Barack Obama ordered 30,000 reinforcements to Afghanistan to curb the rise of the Taliban.



Once the town is secure, NATO plans to rush in a civilian Afghan administration, restore public services and pour in aid to try to win the loyalty of the population and prevent the Taliban from returning.

As the assault entered its second week, Marines and Afghan soldiers faced hours of sporadic but intense gunfights from insurgent snipers—often firing from compounds where families could be seen taking shelter. Troops crouched for cover in muddy ditches, firing rifles, machine guns, and grenades as Taliban bullets whizzed by.

"We've been hurling lead all day," said Lt. Carl Quist, who commands a platoon in the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment.

U.S.-led troops have been pushing south from the town center against a pocket of Taliban fighters.

"They are running out of space now, that's why they gotta fight and stand their ground," Sgt. Melvin Adair, 28, of Clinton, Maryland, said of the Taliban.

A NATO statement said fighting was raging in the northeast and west of the town "but insurgent activity is not limited to those areas."

Taliban leader escapes US missile, brother killed

ISLAMABAD (AP)—CIA missiles struck the most feared Afghan Taliban faction, narrowly missing its commander and killing his brother in the latest blow to the insurgents, Pakistani intelligence officials said Friday.

The attack against the Haqqani group, which has close ties to al-Qaida, followed the arrest of the Afghan insurgency's No. 2 figure and the assault on the Taliban's southern heartland in Afghanistan—all providing an early boost to the Obama administration's bid to reverse the tide of war.

Siraj Haqqani, the group's leader, was the apparent target of the attack Thursday on a village in the insurgents' North Waziristan sanctuary, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not supposed to release details.

Haqqani was in the village to attend a funeral. Afterward, he told his brother Mohammed to drive his SUV to a hideout. Moments after Mohammed Haqqani climbed aboard two missiles struck the vehicle, killing him and three other militants, Pakistani and Taliban officials said Friday.

Had Siraj Haqqani been killed, it would have been a major blow to one of the most aggressive insurgent groups in Afghanistan. The fact that the U.S. came so close suggests the CIA is tightening the noose around the Haqqani organization—even in a sanctuary where it has operated for years.

NKorea vows to bolster nuclear force as deterrent

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea has vowed to bolster its nuclear force unless the United States drops its "hostile policy" toward the reclusive communist nation, adding that its atomic program could not be traded for economic aid.

Pyongyang also designated eight new naval firing zones near its eastern and western sea borders with South Korea in a move that could raise tensions.

North Korea quit the disarmament-for-aid negotiations and conducted a second nuclear test last year, drawing tightened U.N. sanctions. North Korea has demanded a lifting of the sanctions and peace talks formally ending the 1950-53 Korean War before it returns to the negotiating table.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency on Saturday urged the U.S. to make a political decision to establish peace on the peninsula and change what it calls a policy to stifle the North.

The North's "nuclear deterrent for self-defense will remain as ever and grow more powerful ... as long as the U.S. nuclear threat and hostile policy persist," KCNA said Friday in a dispatch from Pyongyang.

The North's "dismantlement of its nuclear weapons can never happen ... unless the hostile policy towards the (North) is rolled back and the nuclear threat to it removed."

North Korea claims it was compelled to develop atomic bombs to cope with U.S. nuclear threats. The U.S., which denies making any such threats against the North, has called on North Korea to return to the disarmament talks that also involve China, South Korea, Russia and Japan.

KCNA's comments came amid diplomatic efforts to jump-start the stalled disarmament talks.

North Korean envoy Kim Kye Gwan plans to attend a seminar in San Francisco before heading to New York to meet with Washington's lead nuclear negotiator Sung Kim either late this month or next month, the South Korean cable news network YTN reported Friday, citing an unidentified source in Beijing. In Washington, State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley on Friday denied the report and reiterated that the U.S. has no current plans to meet with North Koreans officials.

Officials from the U.S. and North Korea last met one-on-one in December, when President Barack Obama's special envoy, Stephen Bosworth, visited Pyongyang.

RP troops kill 6 al-Qaida-linked militants

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine marines killed six al-Qaida-linked militants early Sunday in an assault on a rebel encampment on a southern island and were investigating whether one of the dead was a top insurgent leader, a senior military commander said.

A marine special operations platoon raided an Abu Sayyaf camp outside Maimbung township on Jolo island following intelligence reports that two wanted militant leaders, Umbra Jumdail and Albader Parad, were there, said Lt. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, head of the military's Western Mindanao Command.

One marine was killed and three others were wounded in the clash, Philippine marines spokesman Lt. Col. Edgard Arevalo said.

Officials were trying to verify an initial report that one of the Abu Sayyaf commanders was among those killed, Dolorfino said. The operation was based on a "very strong intelligence report" that the two militant commanders were at the camp, he said.

The recovery of the slain militants and their weapons indicated the Abu Sayyaf gunmen were caught by surprise and could have suffered more casualties since it was unusual for them to leave the bodies of dead comrades behind, Dolorfino said.

He said the 30-man marine platoon was backed by other troops deployed to block the escape of the militants from their encampment on Jolo, where the militants have operated for years despite a U.S.-backed military campaign against them.

The Abu Sayyaf, which has about 400 fighters, has been blamed for numerous bombings, beheadings and kidnappings of Filipinos and foreigners, including Americans. It is believed to have received funds from al-Qaida and is on a U.S. list of terrorist organizations.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Myanmar gives monk 7 years in jail as envoy visits

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—A Buddhist monk in Myanmar was quietly sentenced to seven years in prison during the visit of a United Nations envoy, who had little positive to say about the junta's progress on human rights, a lawyer said Saturday. The sentencing of the monk on Wednesday also came after four activists were ordered to serve prison terms with hard labor on Monday, the day that U.N. envoy Tomas Ojea Quintana arrived in the country to assess the human rights situation. During his five-day trip, the ruling military further refused him permission to see detained democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, as on his two previous visits.

Indian state removes book with Jesus holding beer

GAUHATI, India (AP)—Authorities in a Christian-majority state in India's remote northeast have confiscated all copies of a school textbook that carried a picture of Jesus Christ holding a can of beer and a cigarette, an official said Saturday. The primary school textbook, which teaches cursive handwriting, used the picture of Jesus on the page for the letter 'I'—to represent Idol. Ampareen Lyngdoh, education minister of Meghalaya state, strongly criticized the illustration. "I am appalled and condemn the violent pictorial presentation of Christ. The children for whom the textbook was meant look up to Christ with reverence, and they are shocked beyond words," Lyngdoh said.

20 hurt by turbulence on United flight to Japan

TOKYO (AP)—About 20 people have been injured by turbulence aboard a United Airlines plane flying from Washington, D.C., to Japan. Tetsuya Shinozuka, a police official at Tokyo's Narita International Airport, says many of the injuries were bruises, but at least one person may have broken a leg. He gave no further details. United Airlines spokesman Mike Trevino in Chicago says about halfway into the 13-hour flight, the pilot advised passengers to put on their seat belts. A short time later, the plane "experienced moderate turbulence." He declined to discuss any injuries but says United is cooperating with health officials. The Boeing 747 with 263 people on board landed on schedule Saturday in Tokyo.

World

Shipwrecked students feared remote death at sea

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—When wind and rough seas drove the Canadian sailing ship carrying dozens of teenage students to lean precariously to one side, the captain figured it was just another day of sailing in rough weather.

When the boat immediately keeled again, he knew it was going down.

"The ship had gone from sailing upright to being on her side in the water in about 15 or 20 seconds," William Curry said. "I knew, of course, that the blow to the ship was fatal and that she was not going to right."

Just like that, a five-month academic dream cruise for 64 young students and crew ended in a mad scramble for life rafts as the SV Concordia was quickly sucked beneath the waves. Back on land Saturday, they recounted how fears of starvation and a lonely death far from land filled their heads during two nightmarish days adrift at sea.

Curry called it a miracle that everyone on board made it into rafts and survived after the three-masted Concordia apparently experienced a weather phenomenon known as a "microburst"—a sudden, violent downdraft of wind—that instantly crippled the vessel Wednesday.

The gust that knocked the ship on its side came so suddenly there was no time to radio for help before all communications equipment was submerged and ruined. So hope rested on a distress beacon that launched automatically when the vessel capsized.

AP

Unidentified students of Canada's West Island College, arrive at the Mocangue naval base in Rio de Janeiro, Saturday, Feb. 20, 2010.

"My biggest fear was that nobody knew we had sunk," said 17-year-old Keaton Farwell of Toronto. "We thought our signal had failed and nobody knew and it could be weeks before we were saved. The worst life-and-death thoughts were going through our heads, and everybody was panicking."

After 30 hours in life rafts 300 miles (480 kilometers) off Brazil, hope arrived as "a light in the sky"—a Brazilian air force jet flying high overhead sent to search the area after the beacon was finally detected.

"When we saw the plane, we were crying because of happiness. We knew somebody was coming for us, we knew we weren't going to die in a life raft," Farwell said.

Brazil's navy said the distress signal was first picked up about 5 p.m. Thursday, and an air force plane later the spotted rafts. Passing merchant ships plucked the castaways from the water, and by Saturday afternoon they were all back on land in Rio de Janeiro.

The first to dock looked disheveled and teary-eyed, wearing navy caps and clothing borrowed from their rescuers. They smiled brightly at times, but also broke down and cried as they spoke to reporters on the navy frigate that brought them to port.

Curry said the Concordia's crew had begun preparing 24 hours in advance after getting a forecast of rough weather and high seas, but nothing unusual.

"Those conditions are not at all extreme. It's kind of just another day at sea," Curry said. "It was an extraordinary event—just bad luck to be in that tiny patch of ocean at that time."

All Haitian 'orphans' with Baptists had parents

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—There is not one orphan among the 33 children that a U.S. Baptist group tried to take from Haiti in a do-it-yourself rescue mission following a devastating earthquake, The Associated Press has determined.

In the rubble-riddled Citron slum where 13 of the children lived, parents who gave their children away confirmed Saturday that each one of the youngsters had living parents.

Their testimony echoed that of parents in the mountain town of Callabas, outside of Port-au-Prince, who told the AP on Feb. 3 that desperation and blind faith led them to hand over 20 children to the religious Americans who promised them a better life.

Now the Citron parents worry they may never see their children again.

One Citron mother who gave up all four of her children, including a 3-month-old, is locked in a trance-like state but sometimes erupts into fits of hysteria.

Her husband and other parents said they relinquished their children to the U.S. missionaries because they were promised safekeeping across the border in a newly established orphanage in the Dominican Republic.

Their stories contradict the missionaries' still-jailed leader, Laura Silsby, who told the AP the day after her arrest that the children were either orphans or came from distant relatives.

"She should have told the truth," said Jean Alex Viellard, a 25-year-old law student from Citron who otherwise expressed admiration for the missionaries.

He took them cookies, candies and oranges during their nearly three weeks of detention before eight of the 10 were released Wednesday on their own recognizance and flew home to the United States.

Silsby, 40, and her assistant, Charisa Coulter, 24, remain jailed as the investigating judge interviews officials at the orphanages the two visited prior to the devastating Jan. 12 quake.

The judge flew to the neighboring Dominican Republic on Saturday. The two are to appear in court again Tuesday.

As they left the jail and boarded a U.S. Embassy van, the freed Baptists waved and thanked Viellard, who later called them "great people who were doing good for Haiti."

Key Sunni group boycott deals setback to Iraq vote

BAGHDAD (AP)—A top Sunni Arab lawmaker banned from running in Iraq's March 7 election withdrew his entire party from the campaign Saturday and called on other groups to join the boycott, a move that threatened to undermine the credibility of the vote and raise sectarian tensions.

In announcing his decision, Saleh al-Mutlaq seized on U.S. concerns about Iran's influence in the political process, an allegation likely to resonate with a Sunni community that is historically suspicious of the intentions in Iraq of Tehran's clerical rulers.

Al-Mutlaq's National Dialogue Front has 11 seats in the outgoing legislature, the second-largest Sunni bloc in parliament, and fared surprisingly well in provincial elections in January last year. The group is the main Sunni faction of the Iraqi National Movement, the nation's top secular alliance that has been expected to pose a tough challenge to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Shiite-led coalition.

Sunni leaders have been threatening for weeks to boycott the vote after a Shiite-led panel vetting candidates for suspected ties to Saddam Hussein's regime blacklisted more than 400, mostly Sunni candidates, including al-Mutlaq, preventing them from running in the parliamentary election. Al-Mutlaq says he quit Saddam's ruling Baath Party in the 1970s.

The blacklist is seen as targeting Sunnis, though it includes some Shiites. It also has raised allegations of a conflict of interest since the panel vetting the candidates is led by Shiite politicians Ali al-Lami and Ahmed Chalabi, who are both running in the election.

Iran: VOA, BBC arms of US, British spy agencies

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran's police chief on Saturday accused the Voice of America and the BBC of being the arms of U.S. and British intelligence agencies, and warned of severe repercussions for journalists and activists caught having contacts with them, state media reported.

Gen. Ismail Ahmadi Moghaddam, whose police forces have played a key role in the government crackdown on protesters since Iran's disputed presidential election, was quoted by the official IRNA news agency as saying opposition activists have cooperated with the BBC and the Voice of America "with the aim of weakening and overthrowing the (ruling) system."

"The BBC is the arm of MI-6 (Britain's foreign intelligence agency) and VOA belongs to the CIA" Moghaddam said, according to IRNA. "Those who cooperate with foreign services through transmitting photos, reports, news and anti-revolutionary actions ... should know that all their actions are monitored."

"We will settle accounts with them when the time comes," Moghaddam warned.

Tehran has repeatedly accused the U.S. and Britain of fueling the country's postelection unrest in a bid to oust the Iran's clerical rulers. It also frequently accuses its opponents of being in league with the country's enemies, and Moghaddam's comments appear to be part of Tehran's efforts to discredit the opposition by linking them with foreign powers.

WORLD BRIEFS

Darfur rebels sign truce deal with Sudan

N'DJAMENA, Chad (AP)—Darfur's most powerful rebel group has initialed a truce with the Sudanese government, officials said Saturday, marking the rebel group's return to peace talks aimed at ending the Darfur conflict. The truce between the rebel Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudanese government takes effect immediately, said Idriss Deby, Chad's president, in a statement. Justice and Equality Movement spokesman Ahmed Hussein said the deal initialed Saturday was a framework agreement to guide future peace negotiations, including talks on a permanent cease-fire. He said it will be formally signed in Doha, Qatar, on Tuesday in the presence of Deby and the leaders of Sudan and Qatar.

32 reported dead in storm on Portuguese island

MADRID (AP)—Flooding and landslides swept away cars and knocked down houses as a violent storm killed at least 32 people Saturday on the Portuguese island of Madeira, a news agency reported. The Lusa agency quoted the vice president of the Madeira regional government, Joao Cunha e Silva, as saying another 68 people have been hospitalized in the island's main city, Funchal. Madeira is the main island of a Portuguese archipelago of the same name, in the Atlantic off the northwest coast of Africa.

Hamas: Assassinated operative put himself at risk

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—A Hamas leader assassinated during a visit to Dubai last month exposed himself to attack when he breached security protocol by talking about his trip over the phone and making hotel reservations on the Internet, the militant Islamic group said Saturday. The methodical stalking and killing of Mahmoud al-Mabhouh in a luxury hotel room—widely blamed on Israel's Mossad spy agency—has put Hamas on the defensive over purported security lapses. The new details emerged as the case has spread across several continents with investigators probing possible credit card links to U.S.-based banks and European officials grilling Israeli envoys over fraudulent passports.

Mexican cops find 2 bodies on road near Acapulco

ACAPULCO, Mexico (AP)—Police found the bound bodies of two men on a highway just outside Mexico's Pacific coast resort of Acapulco on Saturday. The Public Safety Department in the southern state of Guerrero said the two men had been shot in the head and a handwritten message was left near the bodies. The body of a third man was found in Ciudad Altamirano, an inland city in Guerrero near the border with neighboring Michoacan state. That body was missing its head and limbs, which had apparently been cut off. A handwritten message—a common tactic of Mexico's drug gangs—was also found near the body. Police seldom reveal the contents of such messages.

Health & Fitness

A young speedskater's training marathon

By LENNY BERNSTEIN
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THE WASHINGTON POST
Aaron Heo, a 10-year-old speedskating prodigy, on the ice in Wheaton, Md.

How's your exercise routine going? Are you hitting the gym consistently, putting in your 30 minutes a day, maybe even 60? Are you doing your reps, pounding out the miles, sticking with the program—even in the face of work and family obligations and the hassles posed by the weather? Feeling pretty good about that?

Meet Aaron Heo.

His typical workout lasts 3 1/2 hours. An hour, sometimes 90 minutes, is cardio work, a relentless regimen of 1,000-meter sprints at breakneck speed. The rest of the time is devoted to a lengthy warm-up, followed by stamina, strength and flexibility work. That can mean 1,000 to 2,000 squats per session, along with stretching, jogging and plyometrics. Then he strains against a canvas belt held by a bigger, stronger friend or coach: back and forth, over and over again.

He does this, on average, four days a week. Another two days a week, he trains on his own.

Aaron is 10 years old.

He and his family live in Warrington, Pa., north of Philadelphia, but Aaron trains in Wheaton and Laurel in Maryland and Arlington, Va. On Thursdays, his mother begins the five-hour round-trip drive with Aaron and his 8-year-old brother, Andrew (another promising local short-track champion) after school. They arrive home after midnight, and she trundles the youngsters off to bed and gets them up for school the next morning. They come back on Friday afternoons and stay through Sunday, living in an apartment they have rented in Laurel. Aaron's father joins them by train on Saturdays.

Aaron, a fifth-grader, is one of the best short-track speedskaters in the United States for his age, and this is the life he and his family have chosen so he can train with Dong-Sung Kim, the 1998 Olympic gold medalist, at the Arlington-based Potomac Speedskating Club.

If all goes as planned, Aaron will be standing on the podium at the conclusion of age-group championships during the first week of March, a few weeks after the Olympic speedskating competition ends in Vancouver, B.C.

It is a life of endless sacrifice for both Aaron and his parents, of rigid discipline to make it all work. He has a few friends from school, where, by the way, he also excels academically. But mostly, his friends are other speedskaters and the siblings and parents of speedskaters, all of whom have formed a close-knit extended family centered on Kim and the Washington area rinks where they spend so many evenings and early mornings.

The sport attracts Asian Americans, particularly Korean Americans such as Aaron and Andrew, whose compact body type is suited to its demands. In South Korea, speedskating is something of a national sport.

Aaron's dream is to skate in the Olympics, to win a medal like the coach who is training him with a careful eye, shouting words of encouragement and instruction as Aaron takes yet another corner, fearlessly flying around the ice, his form flawless, other tiny, speeding youngsters in pursuit.

"We just want to support him as long as he wants to continue," says his mother, Jennifer Heo.

Aaron's father, Peter, owns an auto repair shop in Philadelphia. In addition to the expenses of everyday life, the family pays $1,200 a month for ice time and coaching and $1,500 a month for the apartment, plus the cost of the commute. Speedskate boots run about $1,000 a pair; Aaron and Andrew go through a pair each year. The long, razor-sharp blades are $400 to $500 a pair; the boys need two or three pairs each year.

The skating itself is a breathtaking workout. Kim divides about 50 skaters into three groups based on their abilities. Aaron's group will sprint through a nine-lap, 1,000-meter race in 1 minute 45 seconds, then skate slowly in circles while the other groups take their turns. Then he is back at it again.

But Kim's "dry-land training," the name given to off-ice strength and form work, is truly something to see. In one drill, Aaron gets low in his skating crouch, crab-walking sideways as Kim uses his weight to pull against a webbed belt wrapped around his waist. In another, the youngsters do specialized squats called "cushions" in sets of 500; the older skaters will do 2,000 of these per session.

Jennifer Heo admits to some concerns about the rigors of the training, whether that much physical exertion could harm her son. But she trusts Kim and his methods. Peter Heo says his son's doctor has voiced no opposition to the workouts. He believes the exercise makes his son both physically exceptional and mentally focused. On the report card he received the other day, Aaron was once again on the honor roll.

"The training he does, the coaching, keeps him up with his studies," Peter says. "It makes him focus on his studies."

CeCe LeBauer, president of the Potomac Speedskating Club, says that while Kim is old-school in his training methods, he is careful to adjust his demands to the age and abilities of the skaters, who range in age from 5 to older than 50.

And in the meantime, Aaron will do what is necessary to realize his dream.

Kim "is an Olympic gold medalist," Jennifer says. "That's why we're here."

Have a plan before the next snowstorm

By JENNIFER LARUE HUGET
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

When you rushed to the grocery store recently to stock up before yet another snowstorm, what exactly did you put in your shopping cart?

As Post Food section editor Joe Yonan noted recently in a blog, the traditional eggs-milk-bread trio you likely grabbed has limited utility. How much French toast can a person eat, anyway? Plus, that familiar delicacy is not the most nutritious meal you could assemble.

Still, having bread, eggs and milk serves you better than the instant cocoa one of my editors grabbed in a recent mini-spree. It wasn't until well into the storm that she realized she was hungry for something besides hot chocolate.

Before the next big blizzard hits (which we hope will be a long, long time from now), take time to plan your purchases. With a little forethought, your food haul can help you weather the storm.

I asked Baltimore-based licensed nutritionist and Nutrition Data (www.nutritiondata.com) blogger Monica Reinagel for advice on shopping up a storm. Here are some of her tips, plus one from me: Clip this column and save it for the next big emergency.

■ Plan for meals. Just as the best way to shop for your weekly groceries is to plan your menu and buy the ingredients, you should think in terms of full meals, not just individual foods you think might come in handy.

"Sometimes people come home from the store with 10 bags of groceries and no meals," Reinagel says. If you're not that organized, at least take a pad of paper to the store. If you get inspired by, say, some onions in the produce section, jot down the items you'll need from other parts of the store to make a pot of chili.

■ Consider cooking. One advantage of being snowed in at home is having extra time to cook. "I stock up on ingredients for a little kitchen project because I can really cook" on a snow day, Reinagel says. "This is your chance to roast a chicken, and then you have the bones to make chicken soup. So buy a whole chicken."

If the grocery store runs low on meats, that's a chance to get creative with vegetable-based dishes instead, Reinagel says. And if you're not a great cook, you can still make a mean bean soup using a prepackaged mix of dried beans and seasonings. Just add water and follow the directions.

■ Think quick and nutritious. Of course, you won't go all-out for every meal. You'll want your favorite sandwich bread plus peanut butter and jelly, canned tuna and maybe some canned beans for a three-bean salad. Be sure to have fruits and vegetables, and don't overlook the frozen varieties, which are just as nutritious, Reinagel says.

Other ideas for quick, nutritious meals that will fuel you through your snow shoveling: high-protein pastas with sauce, refried beans with tortillas and shredded cheese, and a fried-egg burrito.

■ Buy the best snacks. Instead of loading up on salty chips (cold weather is dehydrating), buy good-quality popcorn kernels (the cheap stuff doesn't pop up as well, Reinagel notes) and pop it in the microwave in a brown paper lunch bag (on the "popcorn" setting—and stay close by so you can pull it out as soon as the popping slows). Drizzle with just enough extra-virgin olive oil to make a little salt stick. If the power's out, pop your corn on a gas range in olive oil for added flavor and heart-healthy fat.

■ Rethink tradition. One of the go-to meals on a snow day is a grilled cheese sandwich with a bowl of canned tomato soup. But there's lots of fat and salt in that pairing. How about a nice bowl of bean soup (full of protein and fiber) and a cheese quesadilla instead? You cut fat by warming the tortilla in a nonstick pan, maybe with nonstick cooking spray.

What about all the food you already had on hand? Nutrition and fitness coach Pamela Peeke told me that when the power goes off in a snowstorm, she sticks food from her fridge and freezer in garbage bags and buries them in snowbanks. Great idea, Reinagel says. But if you want your food cold, not frozen, stick it in a picnic cooler and put it outside, she suggests. The cooler's insulation should keep the freeze away during the day, though you might want to bring it in at night.

If you've been told the power will be out for just a few hours, though, keep everything where it is, but don't open the fridge or freezer doors. If you must get in there, Reinagel suggests you "mentally rehearse" where everything is that you need to retrieve and make a "targeted strike."

Life & Style

Polanski best director at Berlin film festival

BERLIN (AP)—The Turkish film "Bal," or "Honey," won the top Golden Bear award Saturday at the 60th annual Berlin film festival, whose jury also crowned Roman Polanski best director.

Polanski, whose film "The Ghost Writer," debuted at the festival, was unable to attend the ceremony, as he remains under house arrest in his Swiss chalet in Gstaad.

Producer Alain Sarde, who accepted the prize on Polanski's behalf, said the director told him he would not have attended the festival even if he had been free, "because the last time I traveled to accept an award I landed in jail."

Polanski was arrested when he arrived in Zurich on Sept. 26 to receive a lifetime achievement award from a film festival. The Swiss must decide whether to extradite him to the U.S. to face possible further sentencing in a 32-year-old sex case.

A joint Silver Bear for best actor was awarded to the stars of the Russian film, "How I Ended the Summer." Grigory Dobrygin and Sergy Puskpalis played opposite one another as an older and younger researcher who clash at a polar station on an island in the Arctic Circle.

Shinobu Terajima won the best actress for starring as a wife forced to tolerate the tyranny of her husband who returns disabled from the second Chinese-Japanese war in the Japanese film "Caterpillar."

A Romanian film, "If I Want to Whistle, I Whistle" by Florin Serban of Romania was awarded the Silver Bear runner-up prize. It depicts the tough story of a youth who panics that his mother will flee the country with his younger brother while he is in a juvenile reform center.

The winning film, "Honey," tells the story of a 6-year-old boy who stops speaking when his father disappears. It was filmed in the lush mountains of the Turkish countryside where the boy goes in search of his father, a beekeeper.

Director Semih Kaplanoglu said the award was "like a rebirth" and he hoped that it would be an inspiration to young filmmakers in Turkey.

"The Ghost Writer," based on a novel by Robert Harris, stars Pierce Brosnan as a former British prime minister, Olivia Williams as his wife and Ewan McGregor as a ghost writer hired to complete his memoirs on a rain-swept island off the U.S. east coast.

The movie, Polanski's first since "Oliver Twist" in 2005, was nearly complete at the time of his arrest.

AP

Turkish Semih Kaplanoglu director of the movie 'Honey' reacts after awarding with the Golden Bear for the Best Film at the International Film Festival Berlinale in Berlin, Germany, Saturday, Feb. 20, 2010.

Rap star says Romney first touched him on plane

BOSTON (AP)—A rapper with the Grammy-nominated club act LMFAO says former Republican presidential contender Mitt Romney first touched him—and not the other way around—during a confrontation aboard an Air Canada flight that was preparing to take off from Vancouver, British Columbia.

Sky Blu, whose given name is Skyler Gordy, says in a video posted Friday on TMZ.com that he was trying to go to sleep when he leaned his seat back in the coach section of a the Vancouver-to-Los Angeles flight Monday. He says Romney loudly told him several times to straighten it, as is required until takeoff under commercial flight regulations.

Then, he says, Romney reached forward and grabbed his shoulder.

"I just react—boom—get off me, you know," Gordy says in the video, taking a swing through the air as he speaks. "And I didn't take it any further than that. I just wanted the man not to touch me; that's it."

Gordy says that Romney's wife, Ann, screamed and that the plane returned to the gate before two police officers escorted him off. After being detained briefly, he was allowed to buy a ticket for another flight.

Romney spokesman Eric Fehrnstrom had no comment Friday about whether Gordy was the man with whom Romney had the confrontation, but aides said this week that Romney told them he thought the other person was in a band.

Christine Wolff at Interscope Records confirmed that Gordy made the video, which also was posted on the group's Web site.

Air Canada referred calls to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Sgt. Rob Vermeulen confirmed there was an incident on the flight, but he refused to release the names of those involved because no one was arrested.

Shortly after the confrontation, Fehrnstrom said the passenger became "physically violent" with Romney, but the former Massachusetts governor did not retaliate and instead let the authorities deal with it.

Gordy says in the video that Romney grabbed him with a "condor grip," as a sidekick play-acts the scene and adds: "Vulcan grip."

AP

In this Jan. 31, 2010 photo, Sky Blu, whose given name is Skyler Gordy of the band LMFAO, is seen while hosting the pre-telecast at the Grammy Awards in Los Angeles.

Gordy then outlines his objection, saying, "I'm not your prey. I'm not a salmon going upstream. You're not going to rip me up."

The rapper says he was on the flight because he and his group, LMFAO, had been performing in Vancouver, where the Olympic Winter Games are being held. The Romneys were also there as special guests after Mitt Romney's work heading the 2002 Games in Salt Lake City.

Gordy says that after the plane pulled away from the gate, he put a jacket over his head and was trying to go to sleep when he felt "too upright."

After he reclined his seat, he says, he heard Romney say repeatedly and loudly, "Sir, sir, put your seat up."

Gordy says in the video that he pulled off his jacket, wondered whether Romney was being serious and then thought to himself, "If you ask nicely, I'll put it up."

But then things got physical, he says.

LMFAO, composed of Stefan Gordy and nephew Skyler, made their debut last year and are known for party music; they are best known for their club hit "I'm In Miami Trick." They were recently nominated for a Grammy for their debut CD, "Party Rock" and are the opening act on the current Black Eyed Peas tour.

Judge: Joe Jackson can get Jackson's medical files

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Michael Jackson's father can receive some medical records related to his superstar son's death, a judge ruled Friday.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Mitchell Beckloff ruled that Joe Jackson can receive his son's medical records from the hospital where he died. The judge will review the records first before releasing them to Joe Jackson's attorney, Brian Oxman. Beckloff also said the men can only receive records generated on or after June 25—the day Michael Jackson died at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.

Oxman sought the files as part of an effort to obtain a monthly stipend for the Jackson family patriarch. He said during a hearing last week that he also needs the records to decide whether to pursue a wrongful death lawsuit.

Beckloff's order states a medical expert hired by Joe Jackson can review the files, but not copy them. Anyone who sees the records will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement, the ruling states.

Jackson's estate had sought to quash subpoenas that Oxman issued for the files. Attorneys for the estate argued during a hearing last week that Beckloff should review the files first. They also stated the files shouldn't be released until after the results of a May hearing on Joe Jackson's stipend bid.

Oxman said he was pleased with the ruling and expects to have the records soon.

Beckloff is going to verify the records do not violate doctor-patient confidentiality. Oxman said he didn't expect that to be an issue.

"We are very certain based on prior records that we have from the paramedics that Michael was long deceased and that there were no communications (with doctors)," Oxman said.

He said Joe Jackson deserves to know more about how his son died and the records will also be important in his quest to receive an allowance of more than $15,000 per month.

Howard Weitzman, an attorney for Jackson's estate, said the ruling properly incorporates suggestions attorneys raised last week.

"The estate feels the court's order adequately protects Michael's interests," Weitzman said.

Austrian sculptor Bruno Gironcoli dead at 73

VIENNA (AP)—Sculptor Bruno Gironcoli, whose wide range of eclectic works and techniques defied categorization, has died, the Austria Press Agency reported Saturday. He was 73.

Gironcoli died in Vienna on Friday after a "long, serious illness," the agency said, citing his widow, Christine Gironcoli. His refusal to be pinned down to a particular style or direction made him unique in Austria's artistic scene.

Born Sept. 27, 1936 in the western city of Villach, Gironcoli applied his training as a gold- and silversmith in his early works, using fine wires, for example, to sculpt heads in three dimensional detail in a piece that drew international attention.

AP

Austrian sculptor Bruno Gironcoli is seen in Klagenfurt, Austria in this Nov. 30, 2001, file photo.

He quickly broke out of that mold, moving to plastics, polyester, paper and metal as his preferred materials and from depictions of individual objects to large and complex installations. His later works reflect his interest in power, sexuality and fertility as artistic themes, with sexuality linked to sadism or masochism.

Gironcoli, who replaced Fritz Wotruba as professor at Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts in 1977, was the holder of the Grand Prize of the Austrian State and the Austrian Medal for Science and Art.

Funeral arrangements were not made public.

Vegas hotel unveils Elvis extravaganza

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Three decades after Elvis Presley took his last bow on the Las Vegas Strip, where he once reigned as king, the magicians of Cirque du Soleil have tried to summon back the power of this supreme entertainer in a show titled, "Viva Elvis."

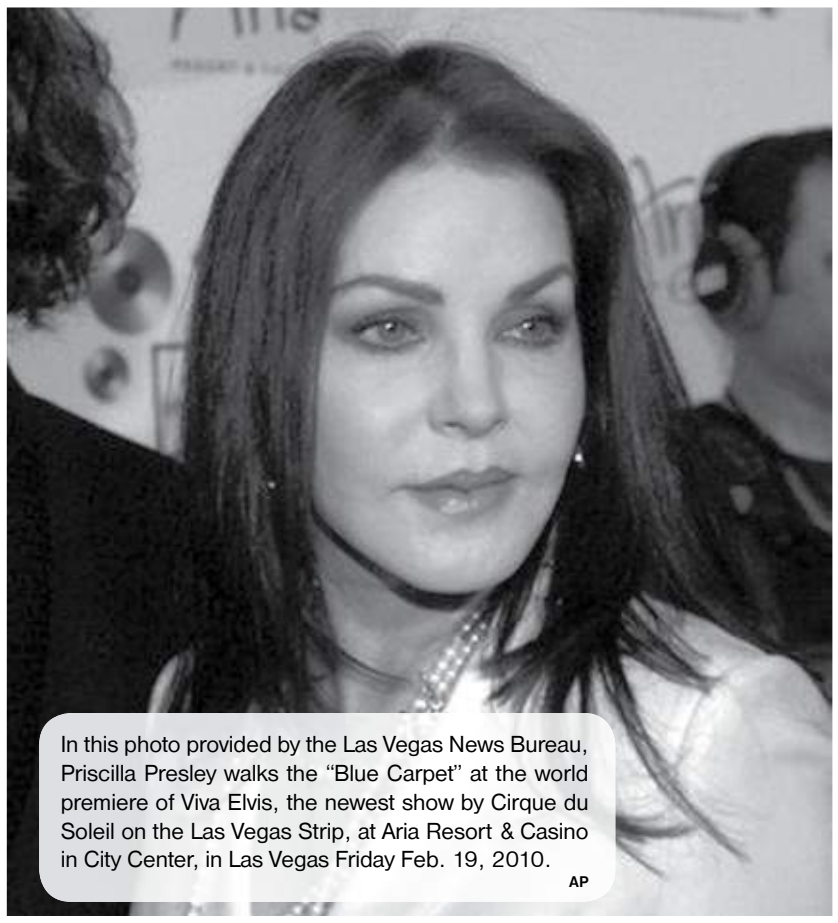
They have mixed a dizzying array of dance, acrobatics, live musicians, over-the-top stage sets, and glitzy costumes with gigantic videos of Elvis in his most legendary performances and memorable life events.

In the words of an Elvis song, the result is "Too Much."

It's as if we're watching two different shows—the circus performances that are the Cirque franchise and a tribute to Elvis that would have stood on its own.

The 45 candy-colored, whimsically designed jumpsuits worn by a dance troupe are fun to watch. And the show has 120 costume changes, including a Follies-like Las Vegas number.

But for all the energy, skill and effort evident on stage, the most riveting segments of "Viva Elvis" are the videos in which the Presley charisma is as mesmerizing as ever. When Elvis is on the huge screen in simple black and white, you can't take your eyes off of him. And the nearby live performers trying gamely to get attention with their colorful dances and acrobatics are seriously upstaged.



In this photo provided by the Las Vegas News Bureau, Priscilla Presley walks the "Blue Carpet" at the world premiere of Viva Elvis, the newest show by Cirque du Soleil on the Las Vegas Strip, at Aria Resort & Casino in City Center, in Las Vegas Friday Feb. 19, 2010.

AP

Only when Elvis disappears entirely, as in a beautifully staged trampoline act featuring comic book super heroes (a comparison to Elvis that's a stretch), do the acrobats have a chance to shine.

Friday night's premiere before a star-studded audience of 1,800 at the specially designed Elvis theater in the new Aria Hotel got off to a rocky start when, in the middle of the first number, house lights went on, the stage went dark and there was an announcement that an alarm had gone off.

After a five-minute break, the show resumed to sighs of relief. Videos were projected in a gigantic juke box frame as Elvis' voice filled the theater singing "Blue Suede Shoes." Scenes from his concerts, the hysteria of his fans, and his TV appearances set the stage for a retrospective of his life.

But as the video rolled, dancers cavorted on stage, a pink Cadillac rolled in, and a gigantic blue suede shoe appeared with acrobats hanging from it.

Other extravagant numbers included a medley of Elvis' early songs with monument-sized recreations of Elvis in cowboy garb aiming a pistol—the same image from the movie "Flaming Star" seen in a classic Andy Warhol painting. But the size was befitting an Egyptian pharaoh. The famous "Jailhouse Rock" dance was performed on a 40-foot-high cell block by dozens of dancers and acrobats, some dancing upside down.

The silliest production number of all involved a mammoth wedding cake for Elvis and Priscilla. A woman on top sang "Can't Help Falling in Love," while couples performed ballet at the base and dancers on roller skates whirled around them. As if there wasn't enough going on, a voluminous bridal train enveloped the cake and reflected blurry photos of Elvis and Priscilla on their wedding day. It gave new meaning to the term over the top.

Among the most successful segments was one dealing with Elvis' time in the Army. Male dancers in uniform swing danced with girls dressed as love letters, while newspaper headlines about Elvis' draft were projected on the back wall. Videos of his induction, including a shot of his mother in tears, provided the kind of emotion that makes Elvis' personal story so compelling.

But the only attempt at a narrative came from a caricature of Elvis' manager, Col. Tom Parker—a poor choice for this kind of insight, since his role in Elvis' story remains a subject of controversy.

The recordings of Elvis classics have been skillfully remixed, making them sound more contemporary than ever, and the decibels are cranked up high.

Before the show began, Priscilla Presley, who was an adviser on the production, said in a brief interview that she hoped, "This tribute will help to tell a new generation about Elvis. The younger kids will get to know Elvis."

She may be right. The show provides enough sensory overload to lure young audiences. The rest of us can hope that it is a work in progress and will be refined as months go by.

We can also be thankful for small mercies: at least there are no Elvis impersonators.

Parents angry at 'American Idol' contestant

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—The success of an "American Idol" contestant is causing a stir among parents who are complaining they never got refunds for performance fees in a failed musical production Todrick Hall wrote and directed.

Hall, who on Tuesday made it into the top 24 on "American Idol," wrote "Oz, The Musical," which he billed on its Facebook page as "a contemporary twist on the classic story, with all new music."

He had been putting on small productions of the show since he was 17, using local, nonprofessional actors for the lead roles and casting local children as munchkins and flying monkeys.

"They were fabulous, just wonderful productions, and the kids just really loved them," said Dallas businessman Greg Money, who had three daughters in the shows.

Then in August 2008, Money agreed to finance a production of "Oz" in Lubbock, Texas, that used a professional cast for the lead roles. That led to a small tour of Texas cities in early 2009 Money says was a "financial disaster."

Reached by phone Friday, Hall said "American Idol" rules do not allow him to participate in any media interviews, however, he did generally confirm Money's account of events. Hall is scheduled to perform Wednesday on "Idol" with the top 12 male semifinalists.

Plans moved ahead to take the show on a national tour and Money said he tried to line up new backers. Several commitments fell through, however, and the show ended abruptly.

Meanwhile, in several cities, auditions had already been held and children were looking forward to performing on stage in a real musical. Many parents had paid a $50 performance fee that was never returned.

In Lakeland, Fla., Jennifer Davis,

AP

In this publicity image released by Fox, "American Idol" season nine contestant, Todrick Hall, of Arlington, Texas, is shown in Los Angeles.

who owns the Art in Motion Academy of Dance, said she was not even informed the show had been canceled. She found out when she opened the studio for a planned rehearsal and no one from "Oz" showed up.

"I don't believe (Hall) came to my studio knowing that the musical was going to go down and they would steal everyone's money, but it happened," she said. "He could have at least called—explained what was going on."

That complaint was echoed by Rhonda McKissock, of Nolensville, Tenn., outside of Nashville, who paid $100 for her two daughters to participate.

"The sad part is, he's such a charismatic person, very talented," she said. "I would love to see him do well. But it's hard to say, 'Hey, great job!' when he's not doing what he promised to these kids."

Money said he was responsible for the finances of the production, not Hall. He said Hall tried to make amends to the disappointed children by putting together a smaller, less expensive show, but even that lost money.

Ron and Debbie Kennedy, owners of the Tutterow Dancers studio in St. Petersburg, Fla., said most of their students participated in the substitute production, "Nights on Broadway," and had a great time, but a few people chose not to participate and were disappointed about not getting a refund.

In the end, Money said, he couldn't afford to keep bankrolling the production and no one else stepped up to take his place.

"People don't understand, there's no devious plan to take these people's $50 and not deliver a show," he said. "I simply cannot afford to put any more money into that production."

Diana Messner, of Pittsburgh, paid $100 to have two children participate in a production that was supposed to take place there in September. She got in touch with Hall through Facebook, even talking to him on the phone, but was not satisfied with his explanation.

"He claims no responsibility," she said, adding Hall told her there were at least 1,000 children who lost their performance fees.

On July 10, Hall also sent Messner an e-mail in which he said he was worried the project was going to "jeopardize my reputation."

"I will assure you though that I'm doing everything in my power to return the money myself, even though as director it is not my direct responsibility to pay back this debt," he wrote.

Davis, the studio owner in Lakeland, Fla., said she hasn't been watching "American Idol" but some of the parents have kept her up on Hall's progress.

"I just don't think that it's fair if he ends up being the next 'American Idol,'" she said.

'Hurt Locker' and 'Avatar' face off at UK film awards

LONDON (AP)—Gritty Iraq thriller "The Hurt Locker" and blockbuster eco-extravaganza "Avatar" are squaring off at the British Academy Film Awards—a possible preview of their showdown at the Academy Awards in Los Angeles next month.

Each film has eight nominations for Sunday's prizes, including best picture and best director for "Avatar"'s James Cameron and "Hurt Locker"'s Kathryn Bigelow, former spouses turned awards-season rivals.

The two directors, who were married from 1989 to 1991, are also going head to head at the March 7 Oscars, where their films have nine nominations apiece.

The British awards, known as BAFTAs, are considered an important indicator of likely Oscar success. Last year, Danny Boyle's underdog picture "Slumdog Millionaire" won seven BAFTAs, including best film; it went on to win eight Oscars.

Stars including Kate Winslet, Uma Thurman, Colin Firth and Dustin Hoffman are due to attend Sunday's ceremony at London's Royal Opera House, with Prince William in attendance to add real royalty to Hollywood aristocracy.

William's office said the prince would present an award, although it did not confirm the recipient. Media reports said it would a lifetime achievement award to actress Vanessa Redgrave.

The "Avatar"/"Hurt Locker" battle seems like a David-and-Goliath story. Cameron's last feature, "Titanic" won 11 Oscars, including picture and director. "Avatar" is a global phenomenon that has taken more than $2 billion at the box office.

"Hurt Locker," the intense story of a bomb-disposal team in Iraq, has made about a hundredth that much—but Britain loves an underdog.

Local favorite "An Education" is also up for eight awards, including best picture and best actress for 24-year-old Carey Mulligan. Mulligan made a career breakthrough—and gained an Oscar nomination—for her performance as a smart schoolgirl having a sobering romance with an older man in 1960s London.

South African alien thriller "District 9" is up for seven awards, while Quentin Tarantino's "Inglourious Basterds" and Jason Reitman's "Up in the Air" each have six nominations.

The best picture nominees are: "Hurt Locker," "Avatar," "An Education," "Up in the Air" and "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire."

As well as Cameron and Bigelow, the director nominees are Neill Blomkamp for "District 9," Lone Scherfig for "An Education" and Quentin Tarantino for "Inglourious Basterds."

The best actor race pits George Clooney, for "Up in the Air," against "The Hurt Locker" star Jeremy Renner, Jeff Bridges for "Crazy Heart," Colin Firth for "A Single Man" and Andy Serkis for his portrayal of musician Ian Dury in "Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll."

Meryl Streep received her 13th BAFTA nomination for "Julie & Julia." The other best-actress nominees are Mulligan, Audrey Tautou for "Coco Before Chanel," Irish actress Saoirse Ronan for "The Lovely Bones" and Gabourey Sidibe for "Precious."

Nominees for outstanding British film are "An Education"; "Fish Tank"; "In the Loop"; "Moon" and "Nowhere Boy."

Celebs record 'We are the World' in Spanish

MIAMI (AP)—Emilio and Gloria Estefan and other celebrities gathered to record a Spanish-language version of "We are the World" on Friday to raise money for Haiti earthquake victims.

Emilio Estefan said he was talking with Quincy Jones about the importance of the Spanish market when the idea developed.

"You know, Latinos always want to do things in a positive way, to show the world that even we come from different places, we wanted to definitely help," he said. "I think now is the best time because people forget."

Actor Andy Garcia was also participating and said that as soon as Estefan called him, he said he would take part.

"You wish you wouldn't have to do a fundraiser for Haiti," he said. "It's going to need attention for quite some time ... It's not just a question of raising money today and everything is going to be all right."

Other singers who were to participate in recording the track include Banda El Recodo, Carlos Santana, Chayanne, David Archuleta, Carlos Santana and Jose Feliciano.

The song, "Somos El Mundo," was adapted by the Estefans, who partnered with Jones, Univision and the not-for-profit We are the World Foundation to gather the artists to record the song. Univision is underwriting, co-producing and doing distribution of the song, which goes on sale in March. All of the artists volunteered.

"I just feel real good. I am not here as an artist. I am here as a human being," said Cuban-American singer and actor Jencarlos Canela.

"I think that the world needs to realize that we cannot wait for a tragedy to happen to come together and to be united."

Singer Chayanne said he was moved by the opportunity to work on the song.

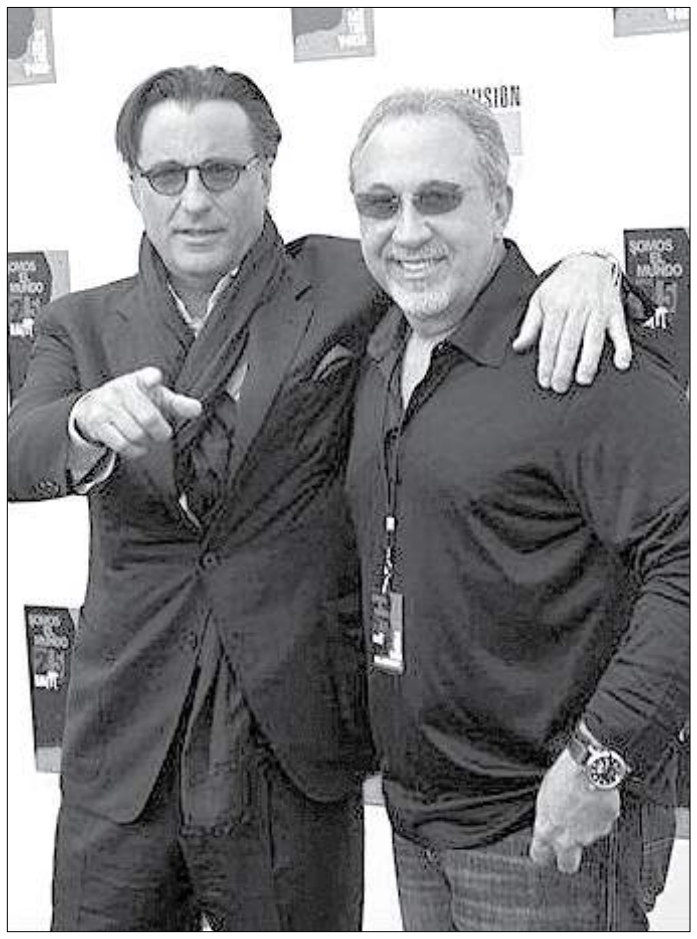
"You do it from the bottom of your heart and you really feel great to do something like this with Emilio and Gloria," he said.

Singer Milly Quezada called it a chance to reach people who had not yet been moved by the events in Haiti.

"It is a divine opportunity for us to stand together in solidarity. Obviously, this song is a beautiful song. Gloria made a beautiful translation," Quezada said.

Singer Ednita Nazario said she was "flabbergasted" when she saw images of the quake's aftermath on TV.

"I think you do what comes straight from your heart. Its important to keep Haiti in people's minds and heart. This is a long-term situation because it's not rebuilding a building, its building a whole country that needs help," she said "The difference is that Haiti has nothing."



AP

Andy Garcia, left, and Emilio Estefan pose for photographers on the red carpet as they go to record the Spanish language version of "We Are The World" (Somos el Mundo) with other top Latin music artists Friday, Feb. 19, 2010 in Miami.

Conan weighing live tour; next stop, Europe?

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Conan O'Brien may be taking his act on the road and even overseas.

O'Brien's exit deal with NBC barred the former "Tonight" host from TV appearances for several months. He is weighing a tour that would take him directly to his fans, according to a person familiar with the proposal.

The person, who was not authorized to publicly discuss the plans, spoke on condition of anonymity.

Details are unsettled, the person said, but O'Brien may perform live in U.S. venues, including college campuses, and head to Europe. An O'Brien spokesman declined comment.

The tour could be a prelude to a new talk show for the comedian, who left "Tonight" in January when NBC tried to bump him to a midnight slot. Possibilities include Fox, which expressed interest.

Jay Leno reclaims "Tonight" next month.

Snipes asks 'What's new?' about IRS plane crash

WASHINGTON (AP)—Actor Wesley Snipes, who has tax problems of his own, had a blunt reaction to news about a software engineer who crashed his plane into an office building with nearly 200 IRS employees inside.

In an interview Friday with the Associated Press, Snipes asked, "What's new?"

Authorities say A. Joseph Stack III, who was furious with the Internal Revenue Service, crashed his plane into an Austin, Texas, building on Thursday. Stack and one other person were killed.

Snipes said tax problems have been an issue in the U.S. from the very beginning.

As the actor put it: "I think it was an issue even for the early colonists and the British, so what's new?"

Snipes, 47, was convicted in 2008 of not paying taxes for three years. He was sentenced to three years in prison and is appealing.

AP

In a Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2009 file photo, U.S. actor Wesley Snipes poses during the photo call for the film ' Brooklyn's Finest ' at the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy.

Despite his legal troubles, Snipes said, "All is very well. We're very positive, we're very confident that things will work out to our benefit and to our favor."

He brushed off the experience as just another part of living.

"These are the bumps and bruises of life. They build character and you learn from it as you move on."

Snipes says he still doesn't understand why the IRS pursued him.

He added, "I'm not a politician, I'm not saving the world, I haven't created a cure for cancer, I make movies ..."

In 2006, "Survivor" winner Richard Hatch was convicted of not paying his taxes and spent more than three years in jail. He complained that the IRS used him as an example.

In Snipes' opinion, "they were successful."

Hilary Duff engaged to NHL player

AP

In this Oct. 16, 2009, file photo, actress/singer Hilary Duff, foreground, celebrates after her boyfriend Edmonton Oilers' Mike Comrie scored a goal against the Minnesota Wild during an NHL hockey game in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

EDMONTON, Alberta (AP)—Here's something for "Gossip Girl" to talk about.

Actress and singer Hilary Duff, who had a recurring guest role on the popular CW series last season, is engaged to Edmonton Oilers forward Mike Comrie.

Publicist Nanci Ryder says the two were engaged last weekend while vacationing in Hawaii. She says in an e-mail distributed by the Oilers on Friday that the two "are very excited to share this happy news."

The proposal comes during the NHL's two-week break for the Olympics.

The 22-year-old Duff and 29-year-old Comrie had been dating for over two years.

Teen with diabetes can have an occasional treat

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have two children, ages 13 and 6. Our older son was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes last year. Because of this, we must carefully watch everything he eats. We're struggling to deal with it, but lately we have other issues we need help with.

We were out one evening and our younger son wanted ice cream. My husband told him he couldn't have any because it would be unfair to his brother. I, in turn, said that it's not fair to punish the younger one. This has become a huge deal for us lately. Can you tell us who is right, and what's the best way to handle this?

TRYING TO BE FAIR IN HAWAII

DEAR TRYING TO BE FAIR: This is something you should discuss with your older son's doctor. It is my understanding that years ago, diabetes was treated more with diet. But with the advent of glucose meters and better insulin, most people with Type 1 diabetes, while trying to eat healthfully, do not completely deprive themselves of treats but accommodate them by adjusting their level of insulin. If your husband refuses to budge on the "treats" issue, then your younger child should be given something else to compensate.

The American Diabetes Association offers a free kit that can be sent to you. It can be ordered by calling 1-800-342-2383 or logging onto www.diabetes.org/families. The kit contains a parents' guide, a card game for your kids, a paperback book, "The Diabetes Dictionary: What Every Person With Diabetes Needs to Know," and more.

If you haven't already done so, please contact the ADA. It will be a terrific resource for you, your husband and your son in managing his diabetes, as well as keeping peace in your household.

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I threw a party for which we hired a bartender, so we could spend more time with our guests.

We figured that, in addition to his hourly rate, we would tip him at the end of the night. Without consulting us, the man placed a plastic cup out for our guests to tip him. My wife was appalled and demanded that he remove it. He actually argued with her, but finally put the tip cup away.

My wife and I asked friends to weigh in on the subject. The men had no problem with the practice, while every woman found it offensive. Were we too harsh? Should a bartender at a private, in-home party be allowed to solicit tips from the guests?

BAR NONE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

DEAR BAR NONE: Absolutely not! When you hired this person, all the details should have been agreed to in advance—and if the compensation your bartender was being offered wasn't satisfactory, he should have refused the job.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married six years and have two wonderful children. Lately, my mother-in-law has made several comments in front of family members suggesting that one of our kids bears no resemblance to my husband—implying that I have been unfaithful.

At first, I took it as a joke. Now I'm wondering if she really believes it. My husband isn't concerned, but I wonder if I should set her straight. What would you suggest?

NO LAUGHING MATTER

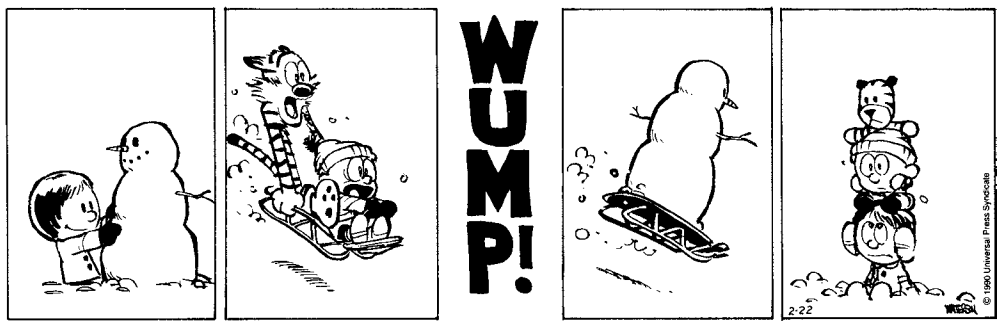
DEAR N.L.M.: I would suggest you set your mother-in-law straight. To say that her remarks are tasteless is an understatement. Either she has a warped sense of humor or she has been watching too many soap operas. Talk with her privately and, if necessary, offer to have both your children DNA-tested to prove their "authenticity." That may be the only way to stop her snide remarks once and for all.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

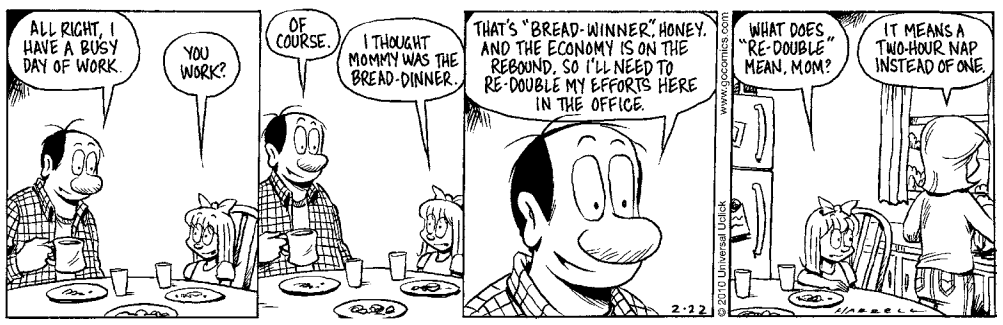


Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


ALL RIGHT, I HAVE A BUSY DAY OF WORK.
YOU WORK?
OF COURSE.
I THOUGHT MOMMY WAS THE BREAD-DINNER.
THAT'S "BREAD-WINNER", HONEY. AND THE ECONOMY IS ON THE REBOUND, SO I'LL NEED TO RE-DOUBLE MY EFFORTS HERE IN THE OFFICE.
WHAT DOES "RE-DOUBLE" MEAN, MOM?
IT MEANS A TWO-HOUR NAP INSTEAD OF ONE.
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2-22

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

...THEN GILLIGAN GETS HIS HEAD GLUED TO THIS PALM TREE.
BABE ALERT.
© 2010 Glenn McCoy/dist. by Universal Uclick
2-22-10
...SO THEN ALL THESE MONKEYS START THROWING COCONUTS AT HIM.
www.gocomics.com

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

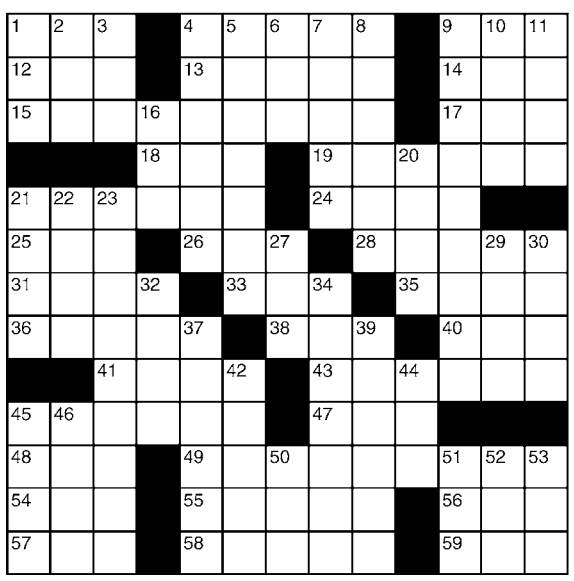
ACROSS
1 Luau souvenir
4 Homer Simpson's wife
9 Ernesto Guevara
12 Skill
13 Declined a restaurant offer
14 Scarlet
15 Puzzle such as this one
17 Raw mineral
18 Environmentally friendly
19 Textbook section
21 Societal subdivision
24 Snead and Spade
25 "— Town"
26 Recipe meas.
28 Not urban
31 Incite
33 Scot's hat
35 Color quality
36 Watered (down)
38 Sweet potato
40 — glance
41 Bed-frame piece
43 Sore
45 Make improvements
47 Equal (Prefix)
48 Clay, today
49 Secondary conversation
54 Automobile
55 Obliterate
56 Roman 3
57 Compass dir.
58 Bank repositories
59 Started

DOWN
1 Varnish ingredient
2 Blunder
3 Judge Lance
4 Costumed one at an arena
5 If all else fails
6 Old Oldsmobile
7 The Dionne Quintuplets, e.g.
8 Ingratiate
9 Intersection
10 Medal earner
11 Paradise
16 Collection
20 Pornography
21 Second-year student
22 Franc replacement
23 Bygone CNN series
27 Salary
29 Initial stake
30 Cordelia's father
32 Sandwich shop
34 "Woman With the Hat" painter
37 Takes to the floor
39 Disarrays
42 — cotta
44 "To be or — ..."
45 "The Amazing —"
46 Verve
50 Lummox
51 Have a bug
52 Tell a tale
53 Tease

Solution time: 24 mins.

G	N	P	■	L	A	P	S	■	B	A	L	D
O	U	R	■	A	S	E	A	■	A	R	I	A
A	D	O	■	S	I	O	N	■	D	E	A	N
L	E	W	I	S	A	N	D	C	L	A	R	K
■	■	■	T	I	N	■	L	O	Y	■	■	■
L	E	V	E	E	■	M	O	W	■	P	E	A
A	T	O	M	■	H	U	T	■	W	I	K	I
C	A	W	■	P	E	G	■	L	A	T	E	R
■	■	■	K	I	X	■	E	L	L	■	■	■
B	U	R	N	S	A	N	D	A	L	L	E	N
E	P	E	E	■	G	O	I	N	■	E	R	A
E	T	A	L	■	O	N	T	O	■	V	I	P
P	O	L	L	■	N	E	S	S	■	Y	E	S

Saturday's answer 2-22



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Drew Barrymore, 35; Lea Salonga, 39; Thomas Jane, 41; Jeri Ryan, 42

Happy Birthday: Concentrate on taking advantage of any opportunity that comes along, maintaining your own schedule. Emotions will be close to the surface, making it difficult for you to hide your true feelings. Therefore, it's best to be upfront and honest. Your numbers are 3, 8, 13, 20, 26, 35, 47

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You may feel the urge to help others but don't do so at the expense of avoiding your own chores or missing an event or activity that you want to attend. It may seem selfish, but you must put yourself first. You can offer suggestions but not hands-on help. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't let confusion push you in the wrong direction. If you become stubborn, you will face defeat. Remain calm and offer to do your part. Love is in the stars and, if you focus on pleasing the person you care about most, you will bypass an emotional mishap. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Your ability to know instinctively how you can make life easier for others will, in turn, bring you the backing you need to develop an idea you've been toying with. Don't let your personal life hinder your productivity. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Take advantage of any opportunity to meet new people, discuss new projects or start something new that can turn into a lucrative pastime. An old friend will need help finding a solution to a pressing problem. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Uncertainty will make it difficult to make a decision that deals with your geographical location and earning a living. Someone you least expect will be able to help you see things more clearly. Avoid making assumptions. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You can get all wrapped up in the melodrama going on around you or you can distance yourself and advance beyond your expectations. An opportunity to form a business or personal partnership is apparent. Don't let your heart rule your head. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You may not be able to please everyone but that doesn't mean you should stop moving in a direction that suits your needs. Expect changes to occur at work. Concentrate on networking and entertaining the people who can influence your position. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Take the initiative and put your creative ideas on the table. Your aggressive action will bring positive results and responses from someone you least expect. A change at home will throw you for a loop. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You may want to dump your responsibilities in someone else's lap but, in doing so, you will lose control of an important project. Let your intuition guide you, not your emotions. Uncertainty at home will cause some upset. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): There is potential to make money if you incorporate old ideas into new projects. A partnership you once had will surface but, before you get involved, consider the emotional turmoil that occurred in the past. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): You won't be thinking clearly when it comes to your personal life and matters pertaining to your home and family. Get things out in the open and you will feel better about the decisions you make. Don't let overindulgence be your downfall. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Secrets are apparent. You will have to ask the right questions if you don't want to be led astray. Don't take action until you have all the facts. Focus on work, money and getting ahead. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are compassionate, caring and affectionate. You are sensitive, emotional and persuasive. You are a dreamer with a vivid imagination.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		2	9	1	5	3		
6								7
	8						5	
	2		7		6		4	
7		6		3		1		5
	9		1		2		8	
	5						1	
2								9
		4	6	8	1	5		

Difficulty Level ★ 2/22

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Saturday's SUDOKU Answer

6	4	7	5	8	3	9	1	2
3	1	2	9	7	4	8	6	5
9	8	5	6	1	2	4	3	7
5	3	1	7	2	9	6	8	4
2	9	6	8	4	1	7	5	3
4	7	8	3	6	5	1	2	9
8	6	4	2	5	7	3	9	1
1	2	9	4	3	6	5	7	8
7	5	3	1	9	8	2	4	6

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/20

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

THE JONAS BROTHERS **Solution: 7 letters**

P	B	O	Y	S	D	I	K	V	O	C	A	L	S	Y
E	I	K	N	A	R	F	P	A	R	T	I	S	T	L
D	N	A	B	A	L	E	O	S	M	U	B	L	A	I
S	W	E	N	G	C	P	V	P	S	M	S	N	G	M
Ⓒ	Ⓤ	Ⓣ	Ⓔ	O	L	T	U	O	O	E	O	H	E	A
L	O	V	E	A	S	O	I	H	C	I	U	R	O	F
H	T	N	N	A	R	T	B	N	T	I	D	L	A	W
J	P	R	C	G	M	K	A	A	G	U	S	U	A	L
I	G	E	A	E	E	M	N	L	L	M	O	U	T	V
N	D	U	S	V	R	R	L	A	Y	T	E	Y	M	S
G	I	E	I	O	E	T	A	R	H	R	R	D	L	N
L	S	N	F	T	J	L	B	E	C	I	I	O	I	F
E	N	R	N	T	A	L	E	N	T	O	R	C	I	A
S	E	I	V	O	M	R	L	A	A	A	K	L	S	S
P	Y	A	W	D	A	O	R	B	C	A	M	E	R	A

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Acting, Albums, Arena, Artist, Band, Boys, Broadway, Camera, Carols, Catchy, Concert, Covers, Cute, Disney, Family, Film, Frankie, Global, Group, Guitar, International, Jingles, Joseph, Kevin, Kids, Label, Love, Lyrics, Media, Moral, Movies, Music, News, Nick, Performances, Piano, Plan, Play, Show, Stage, Studio, Talent, Team, Travel, Trio, Values, Vocals, Youth

Last Week's Answer: Love Story

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P.O. Box 7796 SVRB
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone No.

pro se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re The Matter Of The Petition To Appoint General Guardianship For:	)	FCD GU CIVIL ACTION NO. 10-0067
RHYNIE GRACE HAPDEI	)	
Minor Child	)	**NOTICE OF HEARING**
By:	)	
Ana Sinforosa Seman Hapdei	)	
Petitioner	)	

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on March 8, 2010, at 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom 205, before Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Dated this 1st day of February, 2010.

BERNADITA SABLAN
Clerk of Court

/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANKPACIFIC, LTD., Plaintiff,	)	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 09-0065**
vs.	)	
STEVE K. MESNGON and JUDY ANN M. MESNGON, Defendants.	)	**NOTICE OF SALE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on January 25, 2010, I will sell, at public auction to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property:

Lot No. 330 R 108, containing an area of 870 square meters, more or less, as shown on the Division of Lands and Surveys Official Cadastral Plat No. 330 R 03, dated March 13, 1992, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 92-859, dated March 16, 1992, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Date, Time and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on 1st, March, 2010, at the hour of 11:00 a.m., at Carlsmith Building, Isa Drive, Capitol Hill, P.O. Box 5241, Saipan, MP 96950-5241. The sale will be opened to general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED: Saipan, MP, January 26, 2010.

/s/ Vincent J. Seman
VINCENT J. SEMAN, F0361
Attorneys for Plaintiff

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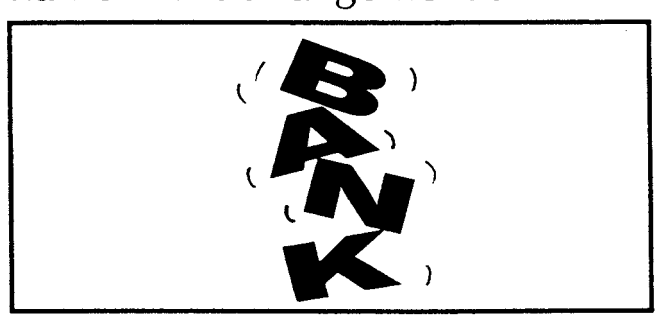

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Find today's solution in this section

Next up for Woods: Working his way back to tour

MARANA, Ariz. (AP)—Tiger Woods suddenly appeared through a door-sized gap in the blue curtains as the room fell silent. He had been out of the public's eye for three months. Fifteen minutes later, he was gone again.

Essentially, what happened Friday was that Woods was seen and heard—in tightly controlled circumstances.

The next big step comes when Woods gets back to golf, a landscape he once dominated but may no longer control.

Golf's biggest star spoke before a friendly crowd of 40 people in Florida, most of whom he had not seen since the Nov. 27 car accident that exposed the dirty side of a squeaky-clean image with sordid tales of sex.

Supporters thought his televised apology for cheating on his wife and letting his fans down was sincere. Critics found it to be scripted.

Either way, it was clear just how differently Woods is viewed now.

Another example: Two employees from a local strip club were chased off the property Friday morning at the Sawgrass Marriott, where dozens of satellite trucks and some 300 media gathered to watch Woods' appearance on short-circuit TV. And about an hour before Woods was to speak, a pair of women not dressed for the chilly weather stood along the side of the road holding signs with suggestive comments.

"Hopefully, as he makes progress with these issues—today would have to be characterized as progress—people will react to that in a positive way," PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem said. "He's the biggest name in sports in the world, and people like that bring people out of the woodwork who have different opinions. It's hard to predict how that's going to play out."

Three wire services—The Associated Press, Reuters and Bloomberg—were allowed in the room at the TPC Sawgrass clubhouse to observe Woods' talk, with no opportunity for questions.

That time comes when he steps fully back into public life, which in his case is the golf course.

"I don't rule out that it will be this year," said Woods, who confirmed he received therapy and was headed back for more on Saturday. "When I do return, I need to make my behavior more respectful of the game."

It was an indication that along with trying to make good at home, Woods is taking responsibility for how he acts at work.

His temper has been a topic throughout his 13-plus years on the PGA Tour, particularly his language. Tom Watson sent Woods a letter last summer about his cursing, urging him to knock it off. Watson shared those thoughts earlier this month in Dubai when he said Woods has not carried the same stature as the greats who came before him, such as Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Byron Nelson.

"I think he needs to clean up his act and show the respect for the game that other people before him have shown," Watson said.

What's unclear is whether being "more respectful of the game" means Woods will consider changing his schedule to compete in some of the 11 tournaments on the main PGA Tour schedule that he has never played as a pro.

AP

Tiger Woods makes a statement at the Sawgrass Players Club, Friday, Feb. 19, 2010, in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

Also noteworthy was the location Woods chose for golf's biggest media showcase ever.

It would have been just as easy for Woods to set up shop in the clubhouse at Isleworth, tucked away behind secured gates not far from his house. In a letter to the PGA's policy board, Finchem said the tour made Sawgrass available as it would for any player, even though no other player could command this much worldwide attention.

It appeared to be a statement by Woods that he knows he has damaged his sport and his tour, and staging such an important event at PGA Tour headquarters was an indication of his support when he returns.

What kind of support will Woods himself get?

Ernie Els was among those furious that Woods chose the Friday of the Accenture Match Play Championship here in Marana to speak—Accenture was the first sponsor to drop him—although that was before he knew Woods had a one-week break from therapy and was going back.

Players are no different from the public. They either like Woods and hope for the best, or don't think much of him and will delight in his failures. The former outnumber the latter by a large margin.

"For me, it's water under the bridge," Sergio Garcia said. "I'm just looking forward to having him back on tour. I'm actually excited to see him back. So it's good to see that he's doing well and hopefully he gets everything sorted out."

Woods has many friends on the PGA Tour, but he is close to hardly any of them. One exception is Notah Begay, who withdrew from the PGA Tour event in Mexico to be at the TPC Sawgrass.

Begay compared Woods' delivery—measured, uncomfortable—to when Woods spoke before a private gathering at his father's memorial service in May 2006. "This is as emotional as I've ever seen him in public," said Begay, Woods' teammate at Stanford.

Looking forward, he believes Woods will find a reception like never before on the PGA Tour.

"There will be a mixture of cheers and boos," Begay said. "Not everybody is going to say, 'Go Tiger.' There's going to be some criticism, things he's not used to hearing. And he understands that it's his fault."

The tour has rarely dealt with so much anger directed at one of its players—there was some heckling of Vijay Singh for saying he hoped Annika Sorenstam missed the cut at the Colonial, and at Bethpage in the 2002 U.S. Open when Garcia saluted the fans with his middle finger after they made fun of his pre-shot routine.

Woods' star power dwarfs the rest of golf, however, and the nature of his sins make him an easy target.

"It's going to be a big deal when he comes back out and resumes his career," Finchem said. "But we can be reasonably prepared for that on short notice."

Finchem is hopeful that notice comes soon, although no one knows when Woods will play golf again. There were apologies and confessions in his 13 1/2-minute speech, just not much information.

The commissioner was far more optimistic about whether Woods can succeed.

"If there's anything about Tiger Woods that's been evident over the last 14 years, it's that when he sets his mind to do something and he brings the attention and focus that he can to do something, he's been successful," Finchem said. "And certainly, that includes improvement in almost every area, whether it's his game, his business acumen, his presentation, his ability to talk on his feet."

Woods actually has proven to be somewhat clumsy in spontaneous speech. That time is coming, and it will be another big step. Only then will it be known if it's a step forward or back.

Poulter routs Garcia to reach Match Play final

MARANA, Ariz. (AP)—Ian Poulter made short work of Sergio Garcia, then retreated to his room at the Ritz-Carlton and started posting on Twitter as he waited to find out who his opponent would be in the final of the Match Play Championship.

Paul Casey and Camilo Villegas are making him wait longer than he imagined.

They exchanged a series of great shots and clutch putts through 23 holes Saturday until twilight in the high desert made it too dark to continue. Casey and Villegas were to return Sunday morning to continue the longest match of the week at Dove Mountain.

"who is going to finish this match off, i want to get into a hot bath, come on guys someone hole a put please," said one of Poulter's tweet.

The hot bath couldn't wait. Before long, Poulter was getting a massage.

Poulter had finished nearly three hours earlier after equaling the shortest match of the tournament with a 7-and-6 victory.

The final stroke of a long day belonged to Villegas. The 28-year-old Colombian had a 3-foot par putt at No. 14 to win the match, but in shocking fashion, he pushed it badly to the right and gave Casey an unlikely reprieve.

"I should have made that putt," Villegas said.

Neither of them had gone the distance in any of their previous four matches. In the semifinals, they couldn't finish.

"laying on the massage table having some treatment getting ready for tomorrow, cant believe they are still out there," came another tweet from Poulter.

The match went overtime when Casey, who didn't take his first lead until the 15th hole, missed an 8-foot par putt on the 18th hole. They gave each other 4-foot par putts on No. 10, and Villegas escaped trouble on the par-5 11th when he blasted out of a desert bush, hammered a fairway metal onto the green and halved the hole with par.

On the 22nd hole, No. 13, Villegas hit a tough bunker shot from 50 yards that stopped 2 feet from the hole for a conceded birdie, only for Casey to knock in a 6-foot birdie to extend the match.

They will resume the match at No. 10 in the morning.

"If I had to get up early, I wanted to be in the final. I didn't want to be continuing a semifinal," said Casey, who reached the championship match last year only to lose to Geoff Ogilvy. "One of us has to be in the final. And both of us want to be there."

It was only the second time in the 12-year history of this tournament that a semifinal match went into overtime. The other time was in 2004, when Davis Love III defeated Darren Clarke.

Casey is trying to give this World Golf Championship its first All-England final.

Earlier in the day, Casey built an early lead and defeated British Open champion Stewart Cink, 5 and 4. It was the fourth time in as many matches that Casey had closed out his opponent by that score.

Cink's loss meant no Americans reached the semifinals for the first time in tournament history.

The morning chill turned worse as gray clouds moved in, and rain began falling as the quarterfinals were ending. The rain came down so hard that play was halted for 10 minutes early in the semifinal matches.

The golf was as miserable as the weather.

Garcia took five shots to reach the first green before conceding the hole. Casey topped a tee shot so badly on the 209-yard third hole that it traveled barely 100 yards and didn't even reach the water hazard.

"It was just nice that rain did back off so we could actually play some sensible golf," Poulter said. "It certainly wasn't enjoyable. The golf would have been terrible to watch."

Poulter had a blast when the weather improved, winning four straight holes to build a big lead, then effectively closing out the match with four straight birdies.

Poulter won seven holes in an eight-hole stretch, but it was the one he lost—to a par by Garcia—that caused some consternation.

Garcia was 75 feet away for birdie on No. 7, while Poulter went over the green and into the desert, his ball stuck behind a bush. He asked for relief from a television tower and was denied. Poulter protested that he was capable of hitting through the bush and over the tower, a shot he would only consider in match play.

Calling in the chief referee, he won his appeal. But when he realized that his free drop would be in a thicker bush, he opted not to take relief, then played away from the tower. Poulter made bogey, forcing Garcia to nervously knock in a 6-footer for par.

After the match, Garcia was asked if he felt Poulter should have played the shot he intended when asking for relief.

"Well, probably," Garcia said. "That's what I would have done after trying to get relief. But he did what he thought was right, and he's the one who has to live with it, so he'll be fine."

Ohno most decorated US Winter Olympian

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP)—Few thrills, no spills, just a slip in the corner that nearly cost Apolo Anton Ohno a place in history.

Ohno's own mistake dropped him to last place with three laps remaining in the short-track 1,000-meter final Saturday night, trailing the South Koreans and two Canadian brothers.

With the gold and silver out of reach, Ohno scooted furiously past Charles and Francois Hamelin to earn a bronze, making him the most decorated U.S. Winter Olympian with seven career medals.

"I really had to fight," he said. "I can't wait to watch the tape and see how I came back from last place to win bronze."

Lee Jung-su of South Korea won his second gold in Vancouver and teammate Lee Ho-suk earned the silver. The Koreans claimed four of the six short track medals awarded.

"Once I advanced to the front, all I could think of was just staying there," Lee Jung-su said through a translator.

Ohno's seventh medal broke a tie with long-track speedskater Bonnie Blair. He now has two gold, two silver and three bronze medals in his three Olympic appearances. The skater from Seattle already earned a silver in the 1,500 last weekend.

"I'm very happy for Apolo's accomplishment," Blair said in a statement from Pacific Coliseum, where she was on hand to watch the race.

"It's a great feat for him, US Speedskating, and the United States of America. We hope that more kids will see his accomplishments and want to try our great sport that has been so good to us and taught us so much about what it takes to be successful in life."

Also attending was the star of the Beijing Olympics, swimmer Michael Phelps, who won a total of 14 gold medals over two Summer Games.

Ohno wasn't quite ready to brand himself the most decorated American in Winter Games history.

AP

USA's Apolo Anton Ohno gestures with seven fingers, the number of Olympic medals he has won, after winning the bronze medal for the men's 1000m short track skating competition at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, British Columbia, Saturday, Feb. 20, 2010.

"In my mind, that's a hard question. How do you answer that? I don't put labels on myself," he said. "I consider myself an athlete on my third Olympic Games, working my heart out. My goal was to come out and put my heart and soul into the Olympic Games and I've done that."

Ohno, whose medals are the most of any short-track skater, appeared relieved as he crossed the finish line, having skated near the back of the pack early in the nine-lap race. He briefly moved up to second, then dropped to last after slipping in the turn despite no contact from the other skaters, forcing his rally near the end.

"When I moved up into second place, in my head I thought that the race was mine and I felt great," he said. "Then I slipped and lost all my speed again. I saw everybody flying by me and I'm like, 'Oh boy, there's not a lot of time. I'm going to have to kind of crank it up.'"

Ohno was up against the powerful South Koreans and the Canadian brothers, who led the early laps. Working together, neither duo gave an inch and Ohno was left to rely on his experience to force his way onto the podium in the last lap.

Ohno grabbed an American flag and skated around, then patted his longtime South Korean rivals on their shoulders.

He has two more events—the 500 and 5,000 relay—to add more medals to his cache.

The 1,000 lacked the drama of Ohno's first race, the 1,500, in which he claimed silver and teammate J.R. Celski took bronze after Koreans Lee Ho-suk and Sung Si-bak crashed in the final turn. Lee Jung-su won that race, too.

On the podium, a smiling Ohno put his right arm around Lee Jung-su as they posed for photos, no hint of the animosity the Koreans felt toward Ohno after the 1,500.

Ohno believed there should have been a disqualification after he and Sung tangled, an insinuation that infuriated Lee Jung-su.

Their dislike for Ohno dates back to the 2002 Salt Lake City Games, where South Koreans believe Ohno stole the gold from Kim Dong-sung, who won the 1,500 but was disqualified for blocking. Ohno threw up his arms as he tried to pass Kim, as though to cry foul.

"I wouldn't say that anything that happened in 2002 still mattered today. That was then and this is now," Lee Ho-suk said through a translator. "That's not any reason for us to defeat Apolo. We will focus on the present and try to beat Apolo."

Ohno made it safely through the quarterfinals and semifinals without any drama. Francois Hamelin advanced to the final after Celski was disqualified for causing Hamelin to crash in their heat.

"I made a risky pass and I got called for it," Celski said.

Ohno clearly had the crowd support, with fans holding up red-white-and-blue signs reading, "U.S.A.4A.A.O" and "Oh No."

Sung won the consolation final.

In the women's 1,500 final, Zhou Yang of China easily won the gold medal.

Zhou breezed to the finish line well ahead of Lee Eun-byul of South Korea, who earned the silver. Park Seung-hi of South Korea took the bronze.

American Katherine Reutter was fourth.

Durant, Thunder spoil McGrady's Knicks debut

NEW YORK (AP)—Tracy McGrady's dazzling Knicks debut couldn't stop the surging Oklahoma City Thunder, who got 36 points from Kevin Durant to beat New York 121-118 in overtime Saturday for their eighth straight victory.

Durant made the go-ahead jumper with 16 seconds left in his 27th consecutive game with at least 25 points, the longest streak since Allen Iverson also did it in 27 in a row from Jan. 12-March 9, 2001. The last longer streak was by Michael Jordan in 40 straight in the 1986-87 season.

McGrady scored 26 points in his first game since the Knicks acquired him Thursday at the trade deadline. But he was on the bench for almost all of overtime, perhaps exhausted after playing 32 minutes in his first action since December.

Russell Westbrook finished with 31 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds in the longest winning streak for the Thunder franchise since a nine-game run early in the 2004-05 season. Jeff Green had 16 points and 11 rebounds.

David Lee had 30 points and 10 rebounds for the Knicks. Eddie House, also acquired at the trade deadline, scored a season-high 24 points.

Pacers 125, Rockets 115

At Houston, Danny Granger scored 36 points, T.J. Ford led a second-half surge and Indiana snapped a four-game losing streak.

The Rockets, playing their first game with four new players from a three-team trade, led most of the game but the Pacers rallied from nine points down to start the third quarter, led by Ford, who scored 19 of his 23 points in the second half.

Troy Murphy added 18 points and 12 rebounds. Aaron Books led the Rockets with 26 points and seven assists, and Luis Scola added 25 points and 11 rebounds.

Raptors 109, Wizards 104

At Toronto, Jarrett Jack had 23 points and eight assists, and Antoine Wright scored a season-high 19 points in Toronto's ninth victory in 10 home games.

Andrea Bargnani added 18 points, Hedo Turkoglu had 16, and Rasho Nesterovic and Jose Calderon each had 10 for Toronto, which topped 100 points for the 20th straight game and won its second straight without All-Star Chris Bosh (sprained left ankle).

Andray Blatche scored 24 points for Washington.

Mavericks 97, Heat 91

At Dallas, Jason Kidd scored 14 of his 21 points in fourth quarter, and Dirk Nowitzki had 28 points for Dallas against short-handed Miami.

All-Star game most valuable player Dwyane Wade missed his second in a row with a strained left calf.

Kidd scored 19 points in the second half as the Mavericks rallied from an eight-point halftime deficit to beat Miami for the 12th straight time in the regular season.

Daequan Cook scored a season-high 22 points for Miami.

Bulls 122, 76ers 90

At Chicago, rookie Taj Gibson tied a career high with 20 points and had 13 rebounds as Chicago beat Philadelphia for its fourth straight win.

Derrick Rose scored 17 points to help the Bulls set a season high for points. So did Kirk Hinrich, who also buried three 3-pointers to give him 773 in his career and break a tie with Ben Gordon for the club record.

Andre Iguodala led Philadelphia with 23 points.

Clippers 99, Kings 89

At Los Angeles, Eric Gordon scored 14 of his 30 points in the fourth quarter, and Chris Kaman had 22 points and 16 rebounds for Los Angeles to give Kim Hughes his first official win as an NBA head coach.

The Clippers had lost their first five games after general manager Mike Dunleavy gave up his dual role as coach to Hughes, his longtime assistant. Hughes coached the Clippers to a 103-94 win in New York on Feb. 4, 2008, while filling in for a flu-ridden Dunleavy, but that game is credited to Dunleavy's record.

Tyreke Evans had 21 points for Sacramento.

Bucks 93, Bobcats 88

At Milwaukee, Brandon Jennings and John Salmons each scored 19 points, and Andrew Bogut added 18 points and 13 rebounds in Milwaukee's fifth win in seven games.

Stephen Jackson led Charlotte with 35 points.

Source: Tigers, Damon agree on $8M, 1-yr deal

The Detroit Tigers and outfielder Johnny Damon have reached a preliminary agreement on an $8 million, one-year contract.

A person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press on Saturday night that the contract is subject to a physical, which will be some time next week. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal hasn't been announced.

Tigers general manager Dave Dombrowski confirmed Friday he had made a contract offer to Damon, but Dombrowski did not return messages seeking comment on Saturday.

The 36-year-old Damon hit .282 with 24 homers and 82 RBIs last season, helping the New York Yankees win the World Series. He likely will bat leadoff for the Tigers, filling the void left when Detroit dealt Curtis Granderson to the Yankees.

Damon also will give Detroit a left-handed bat it needs in a righty-heavy lineup and a veteran in the outfield, where his savvy is an asset and his arm a liability.

The Atlanta Braves appeared interested in adding Damon and the Chicago White Sox recently withdrew their contract offer to him.

Damon became a free agent when his $52 million, four-year contract with the Yankees expired. He wanted a long-term deal at the same average salary, but they weren't interested. The Yankees kept reducing their offer, claiming payrolls constraints. ***(AP)***

NMA thanks corporate, individual sponsors

Northern Marianas Athletics would like to thank companies and individuals for their endless support and generous contributions to the federation the past year.

The companies and individuals NMA thanked for their help are the following: All-Star Sporting Goods, The Athlete's Foot, Boarderline, Coca-Cola Beverage Co. Micronesia, Inc., Duty Free Saipan, Ltd., Fotten Gaga Empire Wear–Representa Co., Herman's Modern Bakery, Inc., Hyatt Regency Saipan, IT&E, Joeten Superstore, Mariano Chiropractic Clinic, McDonald's of Saipan, NTT Docomo Pacific, Saipan Grand Hotel, a Tan Holdings Co., Shell Marianas, 670 RockSteady Shop – Stressfree CNMI Co., Trench Tech Inc., Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Dr. Kurt Barnes, Jose A. Lizama, Division of Sports & Recreation, Allen and Kaye Moses, former Rep. Edward T. Salas, Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb, and Louie T. Wabol.

"To the parents, teachers, schools, athletes, volunteers and many other individuals for all of their hard work, outstanding service, effortless hearts and dedication during 2009. Si Yu'us Ma'ase', Olomwaay, Maraming Salamat Po, Xie xie, Kamsahamnida, Domo Arigato Gozaimashita and Thank You Very Much," NMA said in a press statement

NMA held its annual awards banquet early this month and handed certificates of appreciation to its supporters and trophies to top athletes of 2009.

PIC was handed a plaque of appreciation for being named corporate sponsor of the year. ***(PR)***

Pacific Islands Club's Cole Pritchard, center, receives a plaque of appreciation from former NMA president Kurt Barnes, right, and vice president Louie Wabol, left, during the association's awards banquet early this month.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Briones wins USSP Club Thursday 8-ball

Larry Briones won Thursday's 8-ball tournament at USS Peleliu Club, earning the first slot in the St. Patrick's Day Champions Tournament.

The eight winners of no-entry-fee Thursday and Sunday preliminary tournaments will square off on March 17 for cash prizes and giveaways.

Briones beat Annie Tesiro, Ron Chisato, and Rick Rengiil to top the winner's bracket. Chisato took his opening match from Taylor Watanabe in a rematch of the Valentine's Day Championship. Rengiil defeated Erina Olkeriil and John Mongami before his loss.

Tesiro marched back through the loser's bracket, eliminating Watanabe and Mongami before falling to Arnel Orbita. Orbita also came back strong. After losing his first game to Rengiil, he moved past Olkeriil, Chisato, Tesiro, and Rengiil before falling to Briones in the first game of the championship.

USSP's next "no-fee" qualifying tournament is Sunday, Feb. 21 at 7:30pm. All of the competitions are 8-ball, double-elimination, and follow Billiard Congress of America rules.

For more information, please contact Rose or Ken Phillips at 233-1984. ***(USSP)***

RANGERS

From Page 28

and three base on ball.

The Rangers went 21-for-44 at the plate for a batting average of .477. D-9ers recorded a batting average of only .266, built on a 12-for-45 performance at bat.

Left fielder Cliffton Sillil duplicated Tomokane' feat at the plate, as the former also hit 3-for-5 and contributed two runs. Right fielder Juan Iguel was only 1-for-5 at bat, but scored three runs, while shortstop Shane Yamada went 2-for-5 and tallied two runs.

No D-9ers runner posted more than one run and made more than two hits. Designated hitter Derek Sablan was 2-for-4, while first baseman Chad Atalig went 2-for-5.

Four more teams are entered in this year's SML competition—Rock Steady, Falcons, Tigers, and Fielders.

CONTRASTING

From Page 28

also made important baskets in the final canto.

Shirley's led in the first period, 20-16, but an 11-point production from Kae Bernardo in the second quarter swung the driver's seat to TBK at the break, 43-39.

The host then regained the top view at the end of the third canto, 61-57, when Peredo exploded for 14 points. In the fourth quarter, Opone, who was held to only a field goal in the third canto, took over and drew help from Peredo and Guiab to give Shirley's back-to-back wins after losing its debut against defending champion Micronesian Brokers, Inc.

First Game

Shirley's 84 – Opone 31, Peredo 22, Guiab 19, Sedillo 5, Laxa 4, Catungal 2, Licop 1.

TBK Auto Shop 80 – Bernardo 31, Capalad 23, Demapan 9, Pantaleon 9, Castro 4, De Vero 2, Laquian 2.

Scoring by quarters: 20-16, 39-43, 61-57, 84-80.

Second Game

Pacific Islands Club 75 – Sanciangco 18, Abuy 18, Jung 9, Sublemente 7, Barbo 6, William 5, Bartolo 4, Dacanay 3, Baculud 3, Danipog 2.

Cellular Pro 60 – Rotap 18, Fernandez 15, A. Loste 8, Villanueva 6, Dulfo 6, Manuel 5, Mongami 4.

Scoring by quarters: 15-9, 28-24m 55-46, 75-60.

OL'ACES

From Page 28

cover the ball, prompting Camacho to run to first, second, and then third. When Fielders picked up the ball, third pitcher Allan Aguon moved to home plate, waiting to tag out Camacho in case the latter run to the plate. However, instead of throwing to home plate, Fielders center fielder Cody Kaipat tried to throw to third with the ball short, just passing second base. Camacho saw the miscue and reacted quickly, running and sliding to home plate for the game-ending run.

Camacho's run at the bottom of the ninth inning lifted Ol'Aces to a 6-5 win.

Neither team scored in the eighth inning, while Patrick Reyes' run off Shane Deleon Guerrero's single at the bottom of the seventh inning helped the Fielders send the game in extra innings.

In the other Junior League game, defending champion Docomo Patriots had an easier time in first match at the "Tan Ko" ballfield, whipping the Bank of Saipan Red Sox, 23-5.

The Patriots booked their second win in as many games after only five innings.

In the Senior League, the Fielders thwarted the D-9ers, 16-8.

The Fielders finished strong, making five runs apiece in the sixth and seventh inning to foil the D-9ers' repeated comeback bids,

Results of the other game in the Senior League between Ol'Aces and Hustlers were unavailable at press time, as they began their match around 6pm, instead of the original 4:30pm schedule due to the extended Ol'Aces-Fielders tiff in the Junior League.

In the Big League division, which started last week, Ol'Aces defeated D-9ers, 10-3, while the Tanapag Falcons shut out the IT&E Fielders, 7-0.

MAJORS
Survivors 13, Hustlers 0

Caleb Takao recorded 12 strikeouts to lead McDonald's Survivors to a 13-0 demolition of the Hustlers.

Takao pitched five innings in a no-relief job, allowed only two hits, and walked three. Besides his impressive stint on the mound, Takao also contributed on offense, scoring three runs and hitting 2-for-4 at bat.

Little Falcons 11, Century A's 1

A.J. Evangelista also pitched in no relief, lifting the Little Falcons to an 11-1 win over Century A's.

Evangelista struck out 10 batters, allowed four hits, gave up one run, and walked two. The only time the A's made it to the scoreboard was at the bottom of the second inning with Philip David reaching home plate on Evangelista' wild pitch.

Dragons 5, Red Sox 4

In the second game of the day in the Majors division, Devyn Flores made it to home plate on wild pitch to give the Dragons a 5-4 triumph over the Red Sox.

The match was tied, 4-all, after five and a half innings when Flores recorded the winning run. Before Flores' run, the Dragons had two outs and runners on first and second base. Fifth batter and shortstop Alden Ngeskebei stepped up to the plate and let go of a wild pitch from Sean Maratita, allowing Flores to run to home plate.

Braves 16, Lions 3

In the first game, the Braves tamed the Lions, 16-3.

Shortstop Ian Norita was perfect at the plate, going 5-for-5 and tallied four RBIs to lead the Braves' easy victory. Catcher Franklin Lizama was also flawless at bat, hitting 4-for-4, and had a solo homer at the top of the fifth for his fourth run in the game.

SABLAN

From Page 28

with the former and 27-handicapper carding a 52 on the front before closing out with a 41 on the back for a net 66 and gross 97.

Completing the Top 3 was Martin Sablan, who was four strokes behind the tournament winner with his net 69. The 21-handicapper Martin Sablan had a 48 and 42 on the front and back nines, respectively, for a gross 90.

SGA's second monthly tournament drew 18 members.

The Sablans had a good showing in the February Ace, as Edward's wife, Frances, also had her share of victories in the weekend tournament. Frances won three closest to the pin shots on No. 8, 12, and 16. The other closest to the pin winner was SGA president Ben Aldan on hole No. 6.

There were two longest drive winners in Jess Castro (hole No.2) and Steve Jang (hole No. 17). In the birdies category, Ed Manibusan, Nick Sablan, and Jang tallied two apiece, while Castro, John B. Babauta, Mariano Fajardo, and Bob Magofna made one each.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	35	18	.660	–
Toronto	31	24	.564	5
Philadelphia	21	34	.382	15
New York	19	35	.352	16 1/2
New Jersey	5	50	.091	31

Southeast Division

Orlando	37	19	.661	–
Atlanta	34	19	.642	1 1/2
Miami	29	28	.509	8 1/2
Charlotte	27	27	.500	9
Washington	19	34	.358	16 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	43	13	.768	–
Chicago	29	26	.527	13 1/2
Milwaukee	26	28	.481	16
Detroit	19	35	.352	23
Indiana	19	36	.345	23 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	35	21	.625	–
San Antonio	31	22	.585	2 1/2
New Orleans	29	26	.527	5 1/2
Houston	28	26	.519	6
Memphis	27	27	.500	7

Northwest Division

Denver	36	19	.655	–
Utah	35	19	.648	1/2
Oklahoma City	32	21	.604	3
Portland	32	25	.561	5
Minnesota	13	43	.232	23 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	42	14	.750	–
Phoenix	33	23	.589	9
L.A. Clippers	22	33	.400	19 1/2
Sacramento	18	37	.327	23 1/2
Golden State	15	39	.278	26

Yesterday's Games

Toronto 109, Washington 104
Oklahoma City 121, New York 118, OT
Chicago 122, Philadelphia 90
Dallas 97, Miami 91
Indiana 125, Houston 115
Milwaukee 93, Charlotte 88
L.A. Clippers 99, Sacramento 89

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
James, CLE	56	566	442	1677	29.9
Durant, OKC	52	509	447	1542	29.7
Anthony, DEN	42	418	354	1231	29.3
Bryant, LAL	51	527	302	1426	28.0
Wade, MIA	55	508	365	1436	26.1
Ellis, GOL	49	496	227	1265	25.8
Nowitzki, DAL	54	475	352	1332	24.7
Bosh, TOR	53	463	368	1300	24.5
Johnson, ATL	53	448	149	1137	21.5
Stoudemire, PHX	56	450	297	1197	21.4
Jackson, CHA	53	403	222	1110	20.9
Randolph, MEM	54	445	206	1103	20.4
Maggette, GOL	50	324	355	1013	20.3
Evans, SAC	49	359	246	989	20.2
Lee, NYK	53	449	167	1065	20.1
Gay, MEM	52	396	203	1036	19.9
Rose, CHI	54	453	164	1075	19.9
Kaman, LAC	48	391	162	944	19.7
Boozer, UTA	51	397	194	988	19.4
Brooks, HOU	53	357	173	1020	19.2

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Perkins, BOS	230	377	.610
Howard, ORL	337	559	.603
Hilario, DEN	292	495	.590
Gasol, MEM	297	509	.583
Millsap, UTA	255	440	.580
Bynum, LAL	320	563	.568
Horford, ATL	299	528	.566
Haywood, DAL	202	359	.563
O'Neal, CLE	241	432	.558
Lee, NYK	449	810	.554

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Howard, ORL	56	201	552	753	13.4
Noah, CHI	46	176	376	552	12.0
Camby, POR	52	168	455	623	12.0
Randolph, MEM	54	232	403	635	11.8
Lee, NYK	53	139	468	607	11.5
Bosh, TOR	53	159	446	605	11.4
Duncan, SAN	50	167	382	549	11.0
Boozer, UTA	51	103	455	558	10.9
Wallace, CHA	51	104	448	552	10.8
Haywood, DAL	52	210	321	531	10.2

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Paul, NOR	38	424	11.2
Nash, PHX	56	621	11.1
Williams, UTA	49	485	9.9
Rondo, BOS	52	503	9.7
Kidd, DAL	54	495	9.2
James, CLE	56	473	8.4
Davis, LAC	53	414	7.8
Westbrook, OKC	52	390	7.5
Wade, MIA	55	352	6.4
Duhon, NYK	53	330	6.2

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

SHIRLEY'S STANDINGS

MBI	3	0
Fiesta Resort	2	0
Advance	2	0
Aqua Resort	2	0
TBK	2	1
Shirley's	2	1
Pacific Islands Club	1	0
Mobil	1	1
Docomo/SGH	0	0
Pepsi	1	2
Hard Rock	0	2
McGraw-Hill	0	2
AON/NJ Plus	0	2
Bank of Guam	0	2
Cell Pro	0	3

The Week in Sports

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Newly enshrined CNMI Hall of Famers, Frank Castro, second left, and Jeff Race, third left, pose with fellow Hall of Famers Jess Wabol, left, and Kurt Barnes, right, during the NMASA Annual Awards Banquet last week at the Seaside Hall of the Saipan Grand Hotel

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

From left, Michael Mancao, representing brother and Student Athlete of the Year Matthew Mancao, Female Athlete of the Year Jacque Wonenberg, former NMA president Kurt Barnes, Female Athlete of the Year Yvonne Bennett, and NMA official Robin Sapong pose for a group photo.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

2009 Male Athlete of the Year, Ji Hoon Heo, second left, brought his family members to the NMASA Annual Awards Banquet last week at the Seaside Hall of the Saipan Grand Hotel.

Brightest, finest honored

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

About two months after the 2009 season ended, Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association gave athletes the recognition they well deserved during last week's NMASA Annual Awards Banquet.

NMASA named Ji Hoon Heo and Yvonne Bennett as the 2009 Male and Female Athletes of the Year for excelling in tennis and athletics, respectively, and bringing honor to the CNMI and their respective sports.

Also getting recognition were Matthew Mancao and Jacque Wonenberg, who were chosen 2009 Male and Female Student Athletes of the Year for their outstanding performance last year.

Completing the list of NMASA awardees for 2009 were tennis' Jeff Race and golf's Frank Castro, who were enshrined to the prestigious CNMI Hall of Fame.

The week leading to NMASA's award banquet started with the opening of the biggest baseball tournament on the island, the Saipan Little League Baseball.

Nearly 500 youth sluggers are playing in the Majors, Juniors, Seniors, and Big League division of the SLLB this season.

While the island's Little Leaguers were busy at the ballfield inside the Oleai Sports Complex, Saipan's rising junior netters were also engaged in a whole-day action over at the American Memorial Park for the 2010 Wise Woman Project Coconut Classic tennis tournament.

Coconut Classic had the second and last weekend of its competition, crowning champions in six junior singles division, three adults singles, and the unique mixed-up doubles.

Farther north, Saipan triathletes competed in Enticer, a pre-XTERRA Saipan and Tagaman race. Kieran Daly, Butch Sublemente, and Paul Viator ruled the long, short, and "Did Their Own Thing," division of the race.

Going back to Garapan, 14 pairs joined Fiesta On The Beach "For the Love of Volleyball" Tournament with the tandems of Emily and Melody Matson and Tyce Mister and Chris Nelson prevailing in the women's and men's division finals, respectively.

The busy week concluded with Marianas High School's Lady Dolphins winning the MISO girls varsity volleyball title against Grace Christian Academy's Lady Eagles.

Other regular leagues on Saipan—the Shirley and Navy Hill cagings and Chamolonian's softball leagues—continued last week.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Teams in the Majors division of the SLLB join the traditional parade of teams at the opening of the 2010 season at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Fiesta on the Beach finalists, from left, Bruce Berline, Russ Quinn, Tyce Mister, and Chris Nelson enjoy a light moment during a break in the tournament on the sand court of Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Emily Jones returns to Gabrielle Race during their game in the girls' 14-and-under singles division of the Coconut Classic tennis tournament at the AMP tennis courts.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Aqua Resort Club's Jessie Mina, right, dribbles past AON/NJ Pro Plus' Lawrence Pantola during their game in the Shirley's caging at the JP Center Basketball Court.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Participants in Enticer pose before the race starts at Pau Pau Beach.

Next up for Woods: Working his way back to tour
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PAGE 27

Rangers win BSML opener

Rangers catcher Pat Alepuyo returns to pitcher Dun Tenorio before the start of the top of the second inning of their game against D-9ers during the opening of the 2010 Budweiser Saipan Major League Baseball on Friday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Ford Rangers reasserted their mastery over D-9ers, notching an 11-6 victory during the opening of the 2010 Budweiser Saipan Major League on Friday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

Second baseman Pete Tomokane went 3-for-5 at bat, scored only one run, but had three RBIs. Tomokane, designated hitter Jacob Babauta, and catcher Pat Alepuyo made one RBI single apiece at the bottom of the first inning and the Rangers added two more runs off D9-ers errors to take early control of the match.

The Rangers, who swept the D-9ers in last season's best-of-five finals, hung on to a 5-0 lead after two complete innings before D-9ers made it into the scoreboard on Bob Lizama's run off a fielder's choice at the top of the third. Chris Camacho's two-run triple at the top of the fifth and D-9ers tallied one more run off the Rangers' to threaten a comeback, 4-6.

D-9ers tied the game after five complete innings, 6-all, when Rangers scored only one run at the bottom of the fifth and the former logged two more runs at the top of the sixth. However, Tomokane, who flied out in his previous at bat, blasted a two-run double at the bottom of the sixth and he later reached home plate on a D-9ers miscue to regain the lead, 9-6.

D-9ers was stuck to six runs, as relief pitcher Elton Santos allowed no hit, walked four, and struck out three in the last three innings. Dung Tenorio pitched for the Rangers in the first five innings and had two strikeouts

See RANGERS on Page 26

Contrasting victories for PIC, Shirley's

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Pacific Islands Club won its debut in the 2nd Annual Shirley's Coffee Shop Invitational Basketball League, while host Shirley's claimed its second straight victory after downing separate foes on Friday night at the JP Center Basketball Court.

Shirley's played in the curtain-raiser and stunned previously unbeaten TBK Auto Shop, 84-80, while PIC topped Cellular Pro, 75-60.

PIC started the game with only five players, but with James Abuy and Woon Joo Jung finding their mark early, the San Antonio-based squad took a 15-9 first quarter lead. Ryan Sanciangco reported for the match in the second quarter, while Darwin Barbo arrived in the third to help the team's cause. Sanciangco finished with a co-team high of 18 points, while Barbo chipped in six. Abuy also tallied 18 markers.

Sanciangco made 10 of his 18 markers in the third period, helping PIC lead by double digits on several occasions. He and Barbo then sat on the bench at the end of the third period and mostly in the fourth canto after giving PIC a 55-46 lead.

Cellular Pro failed to overhaul the lead in the fourth canto despite the absence of Sanciangco and Barbo, as Abuy was there to keep things in order for PIC. Cellular Pro dropped to a 0-3 record.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Pacific Islands Club's Butch Sublemente goes for a layup during their debut game in the Shirley's caging against Cellular Pro on Friday at the JP Center Basketball Court.

In the first game, Shirleys' victory ended TBK's two-game winning run.

William Opone paced Shirley's with 31 points, making 11 of them in the fourth quarter to halt TBK's rally. Errol Peredo chipped in 22, drilling crucial free throws in the stretch after going 4-for-6 at the stripe. Junar Guiab added 19 and

See CONTRASTING on Page 26

Ol' Aces outlast Fielders in extra innings

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

It took a big hit and a big miscue to finally end the Ol'Aces and Fielders game in the Junior League division of the 2010 Saipan Little League Baseball on Saturday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

Shortstop's Frankie Camacho, who was beaten to first base in his last two at-bats, hit his target with the ball dropping to deep center between the Fielders center fielder and right fielder. Fielders' outfielders struggled to re-

See OL'ACES on Page 26

The Little Falcons' A.J. Evangelista returns to first base in time before A's first baseman Philip David catches the ball during the top of the fourth of their game in the Majors division of the SLLB on Saturday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Sablan reigns in SGA February Ace

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Edward Sablan is assured of a return trip to the club championship later this year after ruling the Saipan Golf Association February Ace tournament at the Marianas Country Club on Feb. 13.

Sablan shot a net 65 for a one-stroke win over January Ace and reigning SGA Ace of the Aces champion Vince Rosario. Sablan won the June Ace tournament last year, giving him a ticket to the season-ending SGA Ace of the Aces event. Rosario topped last year's club championship, besting 11 other monthly winners.

The 22-handicapper Sablan started slow at the Marpi course with his 45 on the front nine, but found his rhythm in the last nine holes, firing a 42 on the back for a gross 87. Rosario had a worse start than Sablan

See SABLAN on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Edward Sablan, seen here holding his June Ace trophy, won SGA's February Ace tournament played at the Marianas Country Club.